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AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE PROSE STYLE OF THOMAS DE QUINCEY

by

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## Preface

The preparation of the present thesis has been under the direction of Dr. Arthur Melville Clark. I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for his sympathetic encouragement, his valuable criticism, and his understanding scholarly guidance.

I also wish to acknowledge the assistance given me by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, and to express my appreciation for the efforts made on my behalf by the staffs of the British Museum, the J. Pierpont Morgan Library, the Manchester Central Public Library, the University of Glasgow Library, the University of Washington Library, and the University of Alaska Library. I am especially grateful to the staffs of the Edinburgh Public Library, the National Library of Scotland, and the University of Edinburgh Library.

Richard H. Byrns  
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## Introduction

## Introduction

### I

Among the many things for which De Quincey is studied, his prose style is not the least interesting. His mastery of the English language, his subtle accuracy in the unfoldings of his ideas, and his ability to arouse an emotional reaction in the reader are some of the accomplishments that are likely to bring his works into almost any discussion of style. A great deal of the time, De Quincey shows admirably the relationship that should exist between subject-matter and form, and almost always he is stimulating because of his skill in presentation. Saintsbury speaks of his contribution to the development of ornate style in the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sackville West remarks on his "complex and musical style,"<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Eaton points out that he "had the grand manner in prose."<sup>3</sup>

I propose to make a more detailed study of De Quincey's prose style than has yet been undertaken. A close analysis is, I think, warranted at this time. The last analysis of De Quincey's prose style which, though not as thorough as it might be, is still the most detailed we possess was undertaken by Minto<sup>4</sup> some seventy years ago, and although portions of De Quincey's writings have, at various times since, been subjected to fuller analysis, no study ranging over his entire works has been made. A fresh analysis following the pattern established by Minto but using techniques elaborated since his day is what I propose to offer.

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1. George Saintsbury. Collected Essays and Papers, 1875-1920. London: 1923. Vol. I, pp. 210-238; Vol. III, pp. 88-119.
  2. Edward Sackville West. A Flame in Sunlight. London: 1936, p. 336.
  3. H. A. Eaton. Thomas De Quincey. New York: 1936, p. 518.
  4. William Minto. A Manual of English Prose Literature. Edinburgh: 1881, pp. 31-75.

Various difficulties face anyone attempting to make a comprehensive study of De Quincey's works. To begin with, De Quincey was a prolific writer; his output was large and includes over three hundred articles, ranging in length from fragments of less than a page to complete volumes. In bulk alone, the contributions of over forty years of steady writing present a formidable corpus.

Then there is the variety of the subjects he tackled and the variety of the literary forms he practised. He wrote fantasies, tales, literary criticism, biographies, autobiography, political articles, reviews, translations, and a host of essays on very miscellaneous subjects. Since De Quincey's literary techniques varied with his subject matter, a detailed study of his prose style in every manifestation of it is complex.

Moreover, existing collected editions do not contain all that De Quincey is known to have written; and the student of his work cannot confine his attention to the collections but must add such individual pieces as have been unearthed and published separately in various journals. There is also a mass of material not yet republished but attributed to De Quincey. Finally, some writings of De Quincey, articles and fragments of articles which have never been published at all, exist only in manuscript. Indeed, even a complete single list of his entire works is lacking as the De Quincey canon has been surprisingly neglected by scholars.

The fact, however, that articles still lie buried in the files of periodicals and have never appeared in the editions and collections is quite understandable. The task of editing and republishing was formidable, especially for the early editors. The mere number of articles known to be by De Quincey was sufficiently discouraging in itself. Furthermore, the

articles were dispersed in many different periodicals. The resulting difficulties in locating articles sent in, published, or rejected are obvious, and the likelihood of overlooking a single contribution is even greater.

De Quincey, like many another periodical writer, wrote much on the passing questions of the day; some of his topical essays contain elements of lasting interest, but others are of an ephemeral nature "built, as it would seem to us, on slender foundations; a somewhat slight amount of casual newspaper information, wrapped round with settled theory and subtle reflection,"<sup>1</sup> and once the question of the moment ceased to excite interest, the article on it was forgotten and never thought worthy of publication. Yet in any serious study of De Quincey these neglected articles must be considered in order to see the whole picture.

A further consideration is that many of De Quincey's works appeared anonymously, listed only by title in the tables of contents and the indexes of the magazines in which they were published. Since De Quincey himself failed to keep track of his writings, such anonymous publications were very likely to be lost altogether or even considered to be written by someone else.

Still another confusing fact is that much of the evidence relating to unpublished works or to works that have never been republished is not completely valid because of De Quincey's own uncertainty about his writings. He himself was not quite sure what he had or had not written. Some of his "works" never got beyond the visionary stage; others were begun but discarded

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1. Eaton, op. cit., p. 402.

### III

#### Editions, collections, and single works

The first attempt to gather together the more enduring of the writings of De Quincey was undertaken by J.T.Fields of the publishing company of Ticknor and Fields of Boston. Appearing in twenty-four small volumes (1851-1859), the edition collected from the various periodicals to which De Quincey was known to have contributed those articles that were credited to him or that were obviously his.<sup>1</sup> In doubtful cases, the author himself was appealed to, as he had given his consent to the publication and provided what assistance he could at a distance. This collection was republished in 1873 and in 1877 and has been reprinted several times since.

Partly because of the demand for the first volumes of the American edition, and partly because of the patient urging of James Hogg, an Edinburgh publisher,<sup>2</sup> De Quincey began the publication of the "Author's Edition" in 1853: Selections Grave and Gay, from Writings Published and Unpublished, consisting finally of fourteen volumes, the last published posthumously in 1860 and containing by error The Traditions of the Rabbins by George Croly. In guiding his own edition through the press, De Quincey was unable to resist the temptation to revise and add as he thought best; indeed he looked upon the issue as an opportunity to alter for the better those contributions to periodicals that had suffered from the "overmastering

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1.J.A.Green. Thomas De Quincey. A Bibliography Based upon the De Quincey Collection in the Moss Side Library. Manchester: 1908. pp. 24-27, 32-35. The American issue has been superseded by later editions; however, there is still a set in the Manchester Central Public Library to which the De Quincey Collection has now been moved. For another account of the early editions, see W.E.A.Axon. The Canon of De Quincey's Writings, Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, Second Series, Vol. 32, Pt. 1, 1913, pp. 1-20.

2.Alexander H. Japp (H.A.Page). Thomas De Quincey. London: 1890, pp. 338-358.



unfinished because of his inability to complete them. I feel that he is sincerely confused when he writes in obvious good faith that he has contributed articles to periodicals, which on examination prove not to contain them. Even articles published and known to be his might easily have been lost, had it not been for the efforts of others who traced them down and kept them.

These are the general difficulties that arise in any attempt to collect or to consider critically De Quincey's works. For the purpose of an introductory discussion, I have divided his works into three large groups, the division being made purely on the basis of publication.

These are as follows:

1. Editions, collections, and single works which have been republished after their first appearance in the periodical to which they were submitted.
2. Articles attributed to De Quincey which have never been republished since their first appearance in print.
3. Articles which have never been published at all.

In order to provide a starting-point for my discussion, I must make a brief summary of these groups.

precipitation"<sup>1</sup> forced upon the writer who has to send his works hastily to journals.

As the result of the process of revision and addition (and very few articles escaped the second touch of De Quincey's pen), the items in Selections Grave and Gay differ considerably from the articles as they were first published and, of course, from those articles as reprinted in the earlier American edition. Unfortunately, in his own edition De Quincey was unable to organize his volumes on any systematic plan. He seems to have started with the idea of publishing according to the various literary forms in which he wrote; but under the pressure of printing deadlines, and cursed by his own dilatoriness, the edition ended with

"the most provoking jumble in the contents of the fourteen volumes: mixed kinds of matter in the same volume, and dispersion of the same kinds of matter over volumes wide apart, and yet all with a pretence of grouping, and with factitious sub-titles invented for the separate volumes on the spur of the moment."<sup>2</sup>

The Selections were reprinted in 1862-1863, in 1871, and in 1878, each issue containing additional articles that had been omitted from previous collections.<sup>3</sup> It was not, however, until 1878 that the article by Croly was discarded.

The first scholarly attempt to re-organize and to edit the writings of De Quincey was carried out by David Masson, who in 1889-1890 published a fourteen volume edition. Using not only the previous American and British collections, but also material not previously republished from

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1. I, p. 6. De Quincey's General Preface in 1853. (see page 21, note).

2. I, p. xxi

3. notably On the Political Parties of Modern England in 1862-1863, some of the Suspiria de Profundis in 1871, and Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays and The Logic of Political Economy in 1878.

the periodicals themselves, Masson revised the arrangement, corrected errors, included additional works that had been identified, and, in general, placed the entire collection on a systematic basis. He provided footnotes containing information that the author had neglected to give and appended a useful chronology of De Quincey's articles, the dates of publication, and the periodicals in which they appeared. He gave also a Register of unincluded De Quincey Relics,<sup>1</sup> listing those productions that had been given only in part or had been omitted because of their slight literary value or ephemeral interest. The edition was revised and reprinted in 1896-1897, with additional articles identified in the intervening years. It has remained the standard edition to the present time.

James Hogg, who had been associated with De Quincey in the publication of Selections Grave and Gay, published the Uncollected Writings of Thomas De Quincey in 1890 (second edition 1892), two volumes of articles gleaned from the various periodicals with which Hogg himself had been connected. This collection was for the most part absorbed into Masson's 1896-1897 revision of his own edition.

The Posthumous Works of Thomas De Quincey, edited by A. H. Japp, appeared in 1891-1892, being taken from the unpublished manuscripts left after De Quincey's death. Although containing much that was fragmentary in nature, it filled certain gaps, especially some in the Suspiria de Profundis. Since Japp had had the opportunity of sifting the papers left by the author to his daughters, he was able to bring to light some articles of permanent interest. This collection and Masson's together have provided the basis for almost all of the interpretative work done since on the writings of De Quincey.

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1. XIV, pp. 386-390.

At different times, various additional fragments have been brought to light as they have been discovered, although nothing of any great bulk has been unearthed since the editions already mentioned. The most important of these later discoveries are as follows: -

Selections from the Westmorland Gazette. Charles Pollitt.  
De Quincey's Editorship of the Westmorland Gazette  
Kendal: 1890.

Lessons of the French Revolution, The Independent,  
January 15, 1914.

Diary of Thomas De Quincey for 1803. Horace A. Eaton, ed.,  
London: 1927.

De Quincey on the French Drama, More Books, the bulletin  
of the Boston Public Library, Boston: 1939.

Close Comments upon a Straggling Speech. Wordsworth and  
De Quincey in Westmorland Politics, John E. Wells, PMLA,  
V. LV, (1940), pp. 1080-1128.

Some De Quincey Manuscripts, Claude Jones, ELH, V. VIII  
(1941), pp. 216-226.

Thomas De Quincey's Dr. Johnson and Lord Chesterfield,  
printed now for the first time, with a facsimile of the  
manuscript. New York: 1945.

Although this constitutes the bulk<sup>1</sup> of De Quincey's works as they have been republished since he first gave them to the world, there have been innumerable reprints and editions of material included in the collections, especially of the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, which went through approximately thirty editions, including translations, before 1900 and has since then been reissued more than a dozen times. The English Mail Coach and the Suspiria de Profundis have also been frequently reprinted and continue to be included in most volumes of selections. It is perhaps significant that the works for which there

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1. This does not include his letters, which have never been collected in a complete edition.

still seem to be a popular demand are those which might be classified under his own heading of "literature of power." It is likewise true that those essays dealing with aspects of literary criticism, such as Style and Rhetoric, continue to be the concern of scholars. They have been used so frequently in discussions of literary values and techniques that they have achieved the status of classics in their presentation of nineteenth century critical thought. Other portions of his writings have, at varying times, been reprinted in accordance with demands.

#### IV

##### Works not republished

The second group of De Quincey material consists of those works that have never been republished since their first appearance in print. The first portion of this group includes the following articles contributed to Blackwood's Magazine: -

- |     |       |            |   |
|-----|-------|------------|---|
| 1.  | 1826. | December.  | <u>Gillies' German Stories</u>                |
| 2.  | 1829. | March.     | <u>The Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel.</u>   |
| 3.  | 1830. | September. | <u>The French Revolution</u>                  |
| 4.  |       | October.   | <u>France and England</u>                     |
| 5.  |       | November.  | <u>Political Anticipations</u>                |
| 6.  |       | December.  | <u>The Late Cabinet</u>                       |
| 7.  | 1831. | February.  | <u>The Present Cabinet</u>                    |
| 8.  |       | August.    | <u>On the Approaching Revolution</u>          |
| 9.  | 1832. | April.     | <u>Prospects of Britain</u>                   |
| 10. |       | June.      | <u>McGregor's British America</u>             |
| 11. | 1839. | February.  | <u>Corn Laws</u>                              |
| 12. | 1840. | July.      | <u>Lord Stanley's Irish Registration Bill</u> |
| 13. |       | September. | <u>Hints for the Mustings</u>                 |
| 14. |       | October.   | <u>Foreign Politics</u>                       |
| 15. | 1841. | March.     | <u>The Douraunee Empire</u>                   |
| 16. |       | March.     | <u>Conservative Prospects</u>                 |
| 17. |       | May.       | <u>Niebuhr</u>                                |
| 18. |       | June.      | <u>Russia as it was in 1812</u>               |
| 19. |       | September. | <u>Sir Robert Peel's Position</u>             |
| 20. |       | November.  | <u>The Canton Expedition</u>                  |

21.	1842.	April.	<u>Sir Robert Peel's Policy</u>
22.		August.	<u>Anti-Corn Deputation to Sir Robert Peel</u>
23.		September.	<u>The Riots</u>
24.	1843.	July.	<u>The Aristocracy of England</u>
25.		August.	<u>The Repeal Agitation</u>
26.		October.	<u>The Last Session of Parliament</u>
27.		November.	<u>The Game up with Repeal Agitation</u>
28.	1844.	April.	<u>Ireland</u>
29.		August.	<u>Afghanistan</u>
30.	1845.	May.	<u>Maynooth</u>

These thirty articles were first pointed out by W. E. A. Axon<sup>1</sup> in a critical review of Masson's edition. Axon based the case for their authenticity upon the account books of Blackwood's Magazine, which he had been permitted to examine.

There seems to be no doubt that these articles were correctly attributed to De Quincey. In checking the evidence of their authorship, some of which was not available to Axon, I have come to the same conclusion. The various points relating to the question are as follows:

(1) The articles are included in the list of De Quincey writings in Blackwood's "Contributors' Book" given to the National Library of Scotland in 1942 by the publishing firm of William Blackwood and Sons along with the rest of their collection of nineteenth-century material. The "Contributors' Book" was made up directly from the account-books of the firm and consists of a list of those who have written for the magazine, the titles of their contributions, and the date and volume-number in which they appeared. De Quincey is shown as having made over eighty contributions, including the afore-mentioned thirty not yet reprinted.

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1. Axon. op. cit., p. 40.



(2) I examined the account-books themselves<sup>1</sup> and found no discrepancy in the list of articles in them credited to De Quincey and the list in the "Contributors' Book." The account-books list for each number of the magazine the titles of the articles appearing in the issue, the name of the person who wrote each article, the number of pages in the article, and the remuneration given for it. In a separate section, the names of the persons writing for the magazine, the titles of the articles written by them, the number of printed pages in each article, and the amount due for it are also given. De Quincey's name appears as the author of the articles in the "Contributors' Book" both on the pages assigned to each number of the magazine and in the sections allotted to his own contributions to Blackwood's. Since the account-books were kept up-to-date with each number, there is little likelihood of an error in the list of articles assigned to De Quincey.

(3) Additional evidence substantiating the authorship of some of the articles is found in the correspondence of De Quincey with Blackwoods and Sons.<sup>2</sup> De Quincey mentions by title or otherwise identifies sixteen out of the thirty articles in his letters: numbers 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29. Others may have been mentioned, since De Quincey frequently writes of "an article" or a "political article" without mentioning the title; moreover, some of the correspondence is undoubtedly lost; and of course, some of De Quincey's business with Blackwood was transacted in person.

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1. This was done with the help of the present staff of Blackwood's and Sons.

2. National Library of Scotland. Blackwood's Magazine MSS

The evidence seems to be quite conclusive: the thirty articles were written by De Quincey and should be included in any study made of his complete works.

Two other articles have been pointed out by Axon<sup>1</sup> as possibly by De Quincey. Both are on Animal Magnetism and appeared in Tait's Magazine, the first in January, 1834, the second in July, 1838. In the second article there is a reference to the first: -

"It will save many of our readers a world of trouble if, at the outset of this paper, we recall to their recollection an article on Animal Magnetism, which appeared in a former number of this Magazine (January, 1834), from the able, and on this subject - at once psychological and physiological - the congenial pen of Mr. De Quincey."<sup>2</sup>

Concerning this sentence, Mr. Axon remarks: -

"If this passage be regarded as an editorial addition, the possibility is not excluded that the second article also came from the pen of the Opium Eater. As to the first there can be no doubt."<sup>3</sup>

There seems to be no question that the passage itself is not by De Quincey. He would hardly refer to his own writings as coming from the "congenial pen of Mr. De Quincey"; and the qualifying phrase "and on this subject" is apparently a reference to De Quincey's ardent Teryism which did not please the strong Whig policy of Tait's Magazine. However, the authorship of the article itself can be settled in another manner.

De Quincey's relations with Tait were marked by some differences of opinion regarding the amount of money that De Quincey, always uncertain about finances, felt that Tait owed him. De Quincey wrote to Professor

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1. Axon. op. cit. p. 38.

2. Tait's Magazine, July 1838, p. 460.

3. Axon. loc. cit.



Wilson in May, 1838, concerning this disagreement: -

"...On my children's acc't I was compelled to write continued sheets of the Autob. merely to obtain the amount for their daily expenditure. These sheets now make, I think, about 100...."

Well: upon every sheet Mr. Tait kept back a proportion of the price. What proportion he and I think differently. No matter: were it only 5 s on each of 100 sheets it would be a considerable sum...."<sup>1</sup>

The proportion kept back was obviously a bone of contention for some years. In 1839, Tait, in an effort to show De Quincey how the matter stood, sent a letter listing all of De Quincey's contributions from February, 1835 to July, 1839.<sup>2</sup> He gave the date and number of the issues in which they appeared, their length in printed pages (but not their titles), the amount of money due for each article, and the sums paid to De Quincey. Another such statement came from Tait on August 7, 1840, carrying the account up to that month, and accompanied by a protest<sup>3</sup> against De Quincey's demands for money.

Although there was disagreement as to the amount, if any, that was due De Quincey, there seems to have been no argument as to the completeness of the list sent to him as far as it represented what he contributed to the magazine.<sup>4</sup> We have, therefore, an accurate list of articles submitted to Tait's Magazine, taken apparently from Tait's own account-books. In Tait's letter containing the 1838 account are found all the known contributions of De Quincey for that year. Although the

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1. National Library of Scotland MSS 3112, f 287.

2. Ibid, MS 1670, f 16.

3. "During the running of this and the preceding account, various arrests have been laid on supposed funds of Mr. De Quincey in Mr. Tait's hands. In each case Mr. Tait has repeated to the Arrester that he was not indebted to Mr. De Quincey but Mr. De Quincey to him...."  
Ibid, f 69.

4. Ibid, passim.

titles are not given, the month and the number of printed pages correspond to those of the articles we already possess. Nothing new is listed and, moreover, for July, 1838, De Quincey is not credited with having published anything at all in Tait's Magazine. It would seem, therefore, that, although the first article on Animal Magnetism, appearing in January, 1834, is by De Quincey, the second one is not. The passage in the second should not be regarded as an editorial addition to an article by De Quincey but an integral part of an article written by some one else.

An additional work that is probably by De Quincey is also pointed out by Axon. The slight sketch, which is entitled The Street Companion; or the young man's guide and the old man's comfort in the choice of shoes, By the Rev. Tom Foggy Dribble, is a satire upon the Rev. Thomas Frog-nall Dibdin which appeared in The London Magazine in January, 1825. Since De Quincey mentions in a letter to Hessey (September, 1824)<sup>1</sup> such an article on Dibdin, and since the sketch contains stylistic traits indicative of De Quincey,<sup>2</sup> Axon is probably right in his attribution.

Other articles, however, which have been attributed to De Quincey must remain in doubt until more satisfactory evidence is presented. In this group is a translation of Laun's The Somnambulist published in Knight's Quarterly in November, 1824. Axon, in attributing the translation to De Quincey, remarks: -

"It is impossible to suppose that when German was as little known as in the year 1824, Charles Knight should have had two friends,

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1. British Museum MS, Add 37, 215, f 29.
  2. Ibid, p. 36.

both of whom were acquainted with the writings of Friedrich Laun, for whom no one claims first rank or importance, and both of whom were willing to undergo the fatigue of transforming his German into whimsically humorous English."<sup>1</sup>

Axon also points out that De Quincey translated two other works for Knight, The Incognito and The Love Charm, so it is not unreasonable that he should have translated a third, The Somnambulist. But H. K. Galinski offers a strong case against De Quincey's translating The Love Charm,<sup>2</sup> although that translation has always been attributed to him and was included in Masson's and Hogg's collections. If Galinski's article is correct, Charles Knight could call on writers other than De Quincey for translations from the German. Since one of these other translators might have been acquainted with the works of Friedrich Laun, Axon's case is somewhat weakened. It would seem, therefore, that both The Love Charm and The Somnambulist fall into the category of doubtful works; they may have been translated by De Quincey, but until something more definite is brought forward, the question is not settled.

Another attribution is even more doubtful. Axon speculates on the possibility of De Quincey's writing The Stranger's Grave, a novel credited to him by Mortimer Collins.<sup>3</sup> Axon points out that in a letter to Hessey, De Quincey speaks of money advanced for a novel. The Stranger's Grave might be the work mentioned. The Style and subject-matter are not out of keeping with the rest of De Quincey's writings.

But once more the evidence is inconclusive. One feels that had De Quincey ever completed a work of the length of a novel he would

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1. Ibid., p. 37

2. H. K. Galinski, Is Thomas De Quincey the Author of the Love Charm? MLN, V. LII (1937), pp. 389-394.

3. "De Quincey's weird wild story, The Stranger's Grave." Mortimer Collins. Belgravia. October, 1870, p. 450.

have mentioned it at some later period in his life. But there is no reference to it by him nor is there any such reference in contemporary accounts. Furthermore, De Quincey's letter to Hessey,<sup>1</sup> only partly quoted by Axon, indicates that very little was done on the novel. A considerable portion of that letter is devoted to arguments designed to persuade Hessey to accept short works instead of insisting that De Quincey finish his novel. De Quincey might have completed the work and that work might be The Stranger's Grave, but, for the present at least, that is only a conjecture.

## V

### Works never published

At intervals, various unpublished articles written by De Quincey have been unearthed and printed.<sup>2</sup> One group which never seems to have received the attention of scholars consists of four articles in manuscript that were part of the collection presented in 1942 to the National Library of Scotland by William Blackwood and Sons. The articles were docketed together with the inscription "Four manuscripts of De Quincey, n. d." and were thus catalogued under that heading. These manuscripts may be summarized as follows: -

1. The Revolution of Greece. Parts Two and Three.<sup>3</sup> In the April, 1833, number of Blackwood's Magazine,<sup>4</sup> De Quincey published part

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1. British Museum MSS. Add. 37, 215. f 11.

2. Cf. pages 9-10

3. Because the manuscript has no title, I have given it one based upon the contents.

4. The Revolution of Greece, Part I, Blackwood's Magazine, April, 1833, Pp. 476-502.

one of a review of Gordon's History of the Greek Revolution.<sup>1</sup> Part one covers only the first two chapters of volume one of Gordon's work. The manuscript reviews the rest of volume one and all of volume two of the same work, and is divided into parts two and three as indicated by De Quincey in a letter to Blackwood on March 18, 1833.<sup>2</sup> Both the handwriting and the contents of the manuscript give the impression of a work composed in haste.

2. Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life. In a Second Letter to a Friend. As shown by the title, the article concerns the possible results of the Reform Bill. In a digressive manner, De Quincey discusses the probable effect of Reform on Parliament, marriage, the colonies, and the upper classes. The manuscript was apparently meant to be the second in a series of articles written from the Tory point of view since De Quincey published in August, 1831, a similar work: On the Approaching Revolution in Great Britain and its Proximate Consequences. In a Letter to a Friend.<sup>3</sup> The date of composition lies between August, 1831, when the first "letter to a friend" appeared, and January, 1833, when the Reformed Parliament met for the first time.

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1. Thomas Gordon. History of the Greek Revolution. 2 Vols. Edinburgh : 1832.

2. "I return the MS of the Grecian Art. divided agreeably to my notions, and tied up accordingly in separate parcels. I have indorsed on a blank page (after the final page of the second article) the distribution which this arrangement will cause in point of quantity ....."Blackwood's Magazine MSS. The notation, which is on the back of MS page 76, is

pp

"For the 2nd art. 38 viz. from p. 39 to 76 - both inclusively  
- - 3rd art. 36 viz. from p. 77 to 112-both Inc."

3. On the Approaching Revolution in Great Britain and its Proximate Consequences. In a Letter to a Friend. Blackwood's Magazine, August, 1831, Pp. 313-329.



3. To the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine is one of the series of articles on Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.<sup>1</sup> De Quincey protests against the treatment given to his 1827 article, discusses murder in his characteristically ironical fashion, and gives a brief account of a murder in France. The manuscript contains passages that appear in a revised form in the 1839 article on the same subject, indicating that De Quincey may have had the manuscript in mind when he wrote his second article.

4. The Murder of William Coenen<sup>2</sup> is an account of the killing of William Coenen by Peter Anthony Fonk in Erafield, Germany. Since the murder took place in 1816 and Fonk was not sentenced to death until 1822, De Quincey also discusses the slowness of German criminal law. In general, this discussion contains very few of the ironic qualities that distinguish his other articles on murder. Internal evidence indicates that To the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine and The Murder of William Coenen were submitted together to Blackwood in 1835,<sup>3</sup> although there are indications that The Murder of William Coenen may have been

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1. Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts. Blackwood's Magazine, February, 1827, Pp. 199-213.

Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts. (second paper)

Blackwood's Magazine, November, 1839, Pp. 644-653.

Postscript on Murder. Selections Grave and Gay. Vol. IV, 1854.

Murder as a Fine Art (some notes for a new paper) The Posthumous Works of De Quincey, A. H. Japp, ed., Vol. I. 1891.

2. Because this MS also has no title, I have given it one based on the contents.

3. "I send you herewith the most eminent German Murder that has been produced for the last 50 years, which kept all the states of the Rhine and the Danube in agitation for 7 years, and even yet, at a distance of 12 years, is the subject of conversation and profound interest." To the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine.

written as early as 1823.<sup>1</sup>

Two other unpublished articles are in the J. Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City. These also seem never to have received the attention of scholars. They may be summarized as follows: -

1. On the London Magazine.<sup>2</sup> This is an article intended to represent a letter from the "Conductors" of The London Magazine to their readers. Points in the article include a brief discussion of the functions of literature, the part played by Reviews and Journals, a slight sketch of their history, and a promise that in the future The London Magazine will contain critical works on English, French, German, Greek, and Latin literature. Mention is made of two articles that will appear shortly: Letters to a Young Man of Talent whose Education has been neglected and Letters on Transcendental Philosophy. The article was obviously intended for publication in the December, 1821, number of The London Magazine.<sup>3</sup>

2. A portion of a review of "Mr. Ferrier's paper."<sup>4</sup> De Quincey discusses the unpopularity of "metaphysical" subjects, the distinction

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1. The trial lasted until June, 1822, but Fonk appealed to a higher court. "...the court rejected his appeal, and affirmed the judgement of the court below. This judgement, however, before it can be carried into effect, must receive the Royal ratification; and, as that had not by the last account, as yet reached Cologne, the matter may be considered still in suspense." The Murder of William Coenen.
  2. The MS has no title, but it is so described in the J. Pierpont Morgan catalogue as listed in Modern Literature MSS in the Morgan Library, PMLA, Vol. LKVII, No. 1 (Feb., 1952) Pp. 3-36.
  3. "In closing their fourth volume, which is the first under their own management, the Conductors of the London Magazine are reminded to themselves of the claim, which is connected by old usage, with such periodic pauses in the progress of literary labors, for a few words of courteous acknowledgment to the Public and for future execution.." "...as the close of a volume coinciding with the close of their labors for the year 1821 brings with it a necessity for saying something, the Conductors..." On The London Magazine MS
  4. catalogued by the J. Pierpont Morgan Library as a review of "Mr. Tenier's paper," probably because of an erroneous reading of De. Quincey's handwriting.

between the "gross public" and the "net public", and the possibility of philosophical writings becoming more popular. The book under review was probably Institutes of Metaphysics: the Theory of Knowledge and Being (London: 1854. Edinburgh: 1856) by James F. Ferrier, Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews.

Still another item which has never been published is in the National Library of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> This consists of a footnote to an article written by De Quincey in 1846 for Tait's Magazine. The article, System of the Heavens, as Revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes, was published,<sup>2</sup> but the footnote which was omitted because of the lack of space.<sup>3</sup> Like many of De Quincey's footnotes it is in reality a small essay in itself and contains a discussion of the fact that many philosophers and mathematicians neglect to read contemporary works in their own field. De Quincey is especially surprised that Newton and Kant appear to be guilty of "this practical undervaluation of their own greatest contemporaries."<sup>4</sup>

As indicated, De Quincey's works are found in a variety of places. I have attempted to cover this widely scattered material as comprehensively as possible in order to insure that the stylistic characteristics discussed are fully representative. I have also treated certain revealing sections of his writings intensively as a means of showing De Quincey's

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1. National Library of Scotland MSS 1670, f. 114.

2. System of the Heavens, as Revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes, Tait's Magazine, September, 1846, pp. 566-579. The footnote would have appeared on page 569 as a comment on Kant's ideas about Jupiter.

3. De Quincey wrote to Tait on August 10, 1846, that if the article were too long, "a page might be gained by throwing out the note on Kant." National Library of Scotland MSS 1670, f. 101. The footnote itself is not in manuscript but in proof, but the proof sheet does not contain elaborate corrections so perhaps Tait simply omitted it from the article and kept it in his files.

4. National Library of Scotland, MSS 1670, f. 114.



methods of composition and revision.

I have used the Masson edition of 1896-1897<sup>1</sup> for illustrative passages wherever possible, since it is the largest single collection of De Quincey material. But the Author's Edition and The Posthumous Works have been used when it seemed advisable to do so, and due consideration has been given to isolated articles republished at various intervals. Material from the periodicals, especially from Blackwood's Magazine, has also been used, and close attention has been given to those works which are yet in manuscript.

## VI

### Method

In this thesis, the method of stylistic research followed is the searching out and classifying of the characteristic patterns and modes of expression used by De Quincey. Lannering, in a study made on the prose style of Addison, says of this method in general: -

"The collected writings of an author present in every sentence, phrase, and word an element of language expressive of meaning. Of these elements, however, some are more expressive than others, and of the more expressive elements some recur while others do not. It is the features which are highly significant both in themselves and by the fact that they recur that are of primary interest to the style analyst. The even, uniform prose of Addison would be likely to contain recurring items of style, such as certain patterns of word combinations, patterns of sentences, syntactical features, and characteristics of diction, to mention the most important features that come into consideration."<sup>2</sup>

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1. I have abbreviated it in footnotes to the volume and page number and the title of the article.
  2. Jan Lannering. Studies in the Prose Style of Joseph Addison. Upsala: 1951, p. 51.

My concern is with the significant qualities that appear pervasively through the bulk of De Quincey's works. However, it must be admitted that De Quincey's style varies considerably with the subjects treated and the author's mood. There are differences, stylistically speaking, between De Quincey, the creative prose writer of the Confessions; De Quincey, the literary critic of Style and Rhetoric; De Quincey, the historian and scholar of The Caesars; and De Quincey, the political writer on Ceylon and China.

Such a variation, however, is to be found in the prose of any writer with a great range of subjects and moods. It is not to be expected that any author would exhibit those characteristics for which he is famous to the same degree throughout his works. Yet it is quite possible to extract from an author a sufficient number of stylistic characteristics to establish his individuality. Some indeed of these are characteristics unaffected by, or not much affected by, the different uses to which his style is put. It is with the extraction of these more constant characteristics that the following part of this thesis is now concerned.

## Chapter One

### Words and Phrases

## I

Vocabulary

De Quincey's rich vocabulary is the inevitable result of his manifold interests and wide reading. His varied knowledge not only enables him to use words precisely to express an exact shade of meaning but also to draw words from unusual sources to illuminate a subject from a new angle. His own remark might well be applied to himself: -

"The gamut of ideas needs a corresponding gamut of expressions; the scale of the thinking which ranges through every key exacts, for the artist, an unlimited command over the entire scale of the instrument which he employs."<sup>1</sup>

Especially worthy of note is his resort to words of Latin origin,<sup>2</sup> the natural consequence of a mind that was scholarly in its approach to every subject. De Quincey not only abounds in English words that are Latin in derivation, however, but frequently uses words and phrases straight from Latin. Some of these are Latin quotations

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1. XI, p. 297. (On Wordsworth's Poetry)

2. He points out that words of both Anglo-Saxon and Latin origin are necessary: "wherever the passion of a poem is of that sort which uses, presumes, or postulates the ideas, without seeking to extend them, Saxon will be the "cocoon"...which the poems spins for itself. But, on the other hand, where the motion of the feeling is by and through the ideas, where...the sentiment creeps and kindles underneath the very tissues of the thinking, there the Latin will predominate; and so much so that, whilst the flesh, the blood, and the muscle, will be often almost exclusively Latin, the articulations or hinges of connexion and transition will be Anglo-Saxon."  
Ibid, p. 298.

such as many writers use: -

"By all of them the invitation held out was not so much indocti discant, as Ament meminisse periti."<sup>1</sup>

His Latinism may consist of a single word: -

"The movement and play of public business is sufflaminated, and not in a way that looks like accident...."<sup>2</sup>

Frequently, De Quincey will either translate the Latin words or phrases, or use the words in a context that explains them, or choose

Latin words so akin to English ones that the meaning is clear:

"The truth is that at this day...the whole question moved by Wordsworth is still a res integra (a case untouched)."<sup>3</sup>

"Coleridge thought that religion might have been viewed as a religatio, a reiterated restraint, or secondary obligation.."<sup>4</sup>

"....a form of worship, a cultus."<sup>5</sup>

"The describer knows, as well as any of us the spectators know, that he is remancing; the incredulus odi overmasters us all."<sup>6</sup>

"Judge as you will on this last point - that is, on the comparative pretensions of Sterne and Richter to the spolia opima in the fields of pathos and humour...."<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes he gives his quotation a whimsical twist: -

"This comes of not attending to the Latin Maxim, "Hoc age" (mind the object before you). Dr. Alison, a wise man, "hoc egit" (He minded the thing before him); Coleridge "aliud egit" (he hunted three hares at once). And we see the result...."<sup>8</sup>

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1. X, p. 28. (Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected)
  2. IX, p. 247. (Toryism, Whiggism and Radicalism)
  3. XI, p. 300. (On Wordsworth's Poetry)
  4. VIII, p. 210. (On Christianity)
  5. VIII, p. 211. (On Christianity)
  6. XI, p. 74. (The Poetry of Pope)
  7. XI, p. 265. (John Paul Frederick Richter)
  8. V, p. 188. (Coleridge and Opium-Eating)

In a like manner, although much less often, De Quincey will use Greek words or phrases: -

"...one, the narrow meaning, expressing the mere synthesis onomaton, the syntaxis or combination of words into sentences..."<sup>1</sup>

"before him the children of Europe and Asia, of Africa and the Islands, rode as dorypheroi; his somatophulakes, or bodyguards, were princes."<sup>2</sup>

He may also use expressions from other languages, especially French.

Usually he uses well-known words and phrases or translates his foreign expressions into English: -

"We may have, as in America, a shifting, migratory, fugitive body of nouveaux riches, having every characteristic that is obvious or insulting in the most haughty nobility, such as morgue aristocratic, the disdain of their humbler neighbours, the affectation of an exclusive tone of society, the undisguised shrinking from plebian alliances."<sup>3</sup>

"The English translation is one which Mr. Schlosser "durchgelesen hat, und fur deren genauigkeit und richtigkeit er burt (has read through, and for the accuracy and propriety he pledges himself)."<sup>4</sup>

"We recite one more anecdote about her and so leave the reader con la bocca dolce."<sup>5</sup>

"he would, according to the old joke, have been "traduced" (traduit) in French, and also "overset" (oversat) in Dutch."<sup>6</sup>

In using expressions from languages other than English, De Quincey apparently kept in mind the background of his readers. The group for which he wrote, although not expert at languages, might be expected to know some Latin and Greek and a smattering of French. These languages can be quoted more freely than others. German, especially

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1. X, p. 163. (Style)

2. XI, p. 429. (Notes on Walter Savage Landor)

3. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS (Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life)

4. XI, p. 11. (Schlosser's Literary History)

5. XI, p. 243. (Goethe's Wilhelm Meister)

6. XI, p. 397. (Notes on Walter Savage Landor)

during the first years when De Quincey wrote, was not known to most of his readers. Consequently, De Quincey seems to have taken particular care to make his quotations from German understandable. He almost always translates them into English.

De Quincey uses words drawn from many fields. His wide range of vocabulary is indicated by the number and variety of terms which he brings to bear on any subject. But it should be noted that his breadth of vocabulary can only be estimated properly by considering the terms which are not peculiar to the subject he is discussing. It is obvious that almost every subject has technical terms which will be used by a writer discussing it,<sup>1</sup> and the use of such terms is not in itself indicative of an extensive vocabulary. But the bringing in of words from a great many other fields and using them to illuminate the subject under discussion can be taken as evidence of an extensive vocabulary. Thus it is that the representative passages which I have included do not contain terms which are those of the subject itself, but do contain terms taken from other fields and used by De Quincey to make a passage more effective.

De Quincey frequently uses words and phrases taken from the field of music. Not only single words and short phrases but also whole passages may be cast in musical terms. The following are short illustrations: -

"How unmeaning a sound was opium at that time! What solemn chords does it now strike upon my heart!"<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. He was acutely conscious of the necessity for accurate terminology. See his discussion on the terminology of Kant, X, pp. 73-77. (Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected.)
  2. III, p. 379. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)



"Where....shall one hope to find music so Miltonic, an intonation of such solemn chords as are struck in the following opening bar of a passage in the *Urn-Burial*..."<sup>1</sup>

"...the vagueness of incoherence and a rhapsody of utter contradiction..."<sup>2</sup>

He often makes use of terms drawn from business and trade. The metaphor used in the first example is a favorite one of De Quincey: -

"For instance, I see little reason to doubt that economically the Apostles had erred, and through their very simplicity of heart had erred, as to that joint-stock company which they... had formed in an early stage of the infant church."<sup>3</sup>

"Surely there needed no arrear of sorrow to consummate this disaster."<sup>4</sup>

"The tone....of the Whigs, - the drooping tone of men trading confessedly upon other people's funds and other people's credit....."<sup>5</sup>

He makes use of a great many terms taken from sailing and the sea: -

"The sheet-anchor for the storm-beaten sufferer who is labouring to recover a haven of rest from the agonies of intemperance."<sup>6</sup>

"Old Bailey practioners, called in...to teach the art, in nautical phrase, of sailing as near the wind as might be found possible without absolutely foundering."<sup>7</sup>

He quite often uses legal terms. The metaphor in the first example appeared in the Author's Edition, the earlier versions of the passage

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1. I, p. 105. (Rhetoric)
  2. V, p. 368. (Charlemagne)
  3. VIII, p. 307. (Protestantism)
  4. VII, p. 443. (Ceylon)
  5. IX, p. 317. (Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism)
  6. XIV, p. 270. (National Temperance Movements)
  7. VIII, p. 311. (Casuistry)



being somewhat less elaborate: -

"All was apparently finished. The court was sitting; the case was heard; the judge had finished; and only the verdict was yet in arrears."<sup>1</sup>

"Here was a duplie (in the lawyer's phrase) to which it was vain for Mr. More to attempt a triplicie."<sup>2</sup>

Expressions taken from war and military life are quite common in

De Quincey's writings: -

"But at present the whole artillery of her displeasure seemed to be unmasked...against a moral aberration."<sup>3</sup>

"...and they closed the great gates against an enemy that entered by the postern."<sup>4</sup>

"Papa and Mama were both on the alert, and often intercepted the young deserter by a cross march or an ambuscade."<sup>5</sup>

"We must be sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested, laid asleep, tranced, racked into a dread armistice."<sup>6</sup>

The sciences, especially astronomy, provide him with a great many words: -

"John Paul's works are the galaxy of the German literary firmament...."<sup>7</sup>

"The Greek race, suffering a long occultation under the blaze of the Roman Empire."<sup>8</sup>

".....And on this two fold arena a torch was applied to that inflammable gas which exhaled spontaneously from so excitable a mind as the mind of the Athenian."<sup>9</sup>

He draws upon mathematics: -

"When business was moderate, dinner was allowed to divide and bisect it."<sup>10</sup>

- 
1. XIII, p. 313. (The Vision of Sudden Death)
  2. XIV, p. 117. (Recollections of Hannah More)
  3. III, p. 315. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  4. VII, p. 121. (The Essenes)
  5. IV, p. 401. (Goethe)
  6. X, p. 393. (On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth)
  7. XI, p. 270. (John Paul Frederick Richter)
  8. VII, p. 277. (Greece under the Romans)
  9. X, p. 240. (Style)
  10. VII, p. 36. (The Casuistry of Roman Meals)

De Quincey frequently uses terms taken from the various arts and crafts. Painting and sculpture are used as sources quite often: -

"If any circumstances of humour are introduced by the poetic painter, they must be such as will blend and fall into harmony with the ruling passion of the scene."<sup>1</sup>

"...the passion is essentially fixed throughout, not mantling and undulating with the breath of change, but frozen into marble life."<sup>2</sup>

"...it is rough and horrent with figures in strong relief, like the embossed gold of an ancient vase."<sup>3</sup>

"To Parr it was open, at least, to have reported that in no instance had he left it a matter of doubt what language it was that he professed to be writing, whether it were Greek enamelled upon an English ground, or a substratum of Greek tessellated by English."<sup>4</sup>

He may take words and phrases from medical terminology: -

"(Shelley) was still in the earliest part of his academic career, when his obstinate and reiterated attempt to inoculate the university with a disease that he fancied indispensable to their mental health caused his expulsion."<sup>5</sup>

De Quincey's use of the terms of rhetoric is not confined to his works of literary criticism. In the following passage, he casts his language in words drawn from rhetoric although the subject under discussion is Hume's work concerning miracles: -

"....We may be sure that his choice of witnesses was not accidental. In fact, his apparent carelessness marks a very discreet management. His object was, under the fiction of an independent multitude, to smuggle in a virtual unity; for his court physicians are no plural body in effect and virtue, but a mere pleonasm and a tautology."<sup>6</sup>

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1. XI, p. 264. (John Paul Frederick Richter)
  2. X, p. 349. (Theory of Greek Tragedy)
  3. Ibid., p. 345.
  4. V, p. 88. (Br. Samuel Parr)
  5. XI, p. 362. (Gilfillan's Literary Portraits: Shelley)
  6. VIII, p. 161. (Miracles as Subjects of Testimony)

He may use words from a pseudo-art or a pseudo-science: -

"Too often...mere tricks of verbal legerdemain, fantastic snares for puzzling the understanding by means of the equivocalities that lurk in language, entered largely into the popular books of logic...."<sup>1</sup>

"But now, reader, do not worry me any more with questions or calls for explanation. When I do not know, nor how, but not the less I feel a mesmeric impression that you have been bothering me with magnetic passes...."<sup>2</sup>

Philosophy provides him with some expressions: -

"But the other mode of value - viz, Exchange Value - which is far more important to political economy, being no longer a regulative but a constitutive idea, now steps naturally into the place standing next in order for investigation."<sup>3</sup>

The extensiveness of De Quincey's vocabulary is also shown by the different levels of language that he uses. A short summary of the terms generally applied to such levels may be helpful: <sup>4-</sup>

First, on the highest level of usage is placed standard English, that used by the educated classes when they are not speaking or writing colloquially or slangily. Standard English varies from that which is very formal to that which approaches familiar

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1. V, p. 333. (Sir William Hamilton)

2. Ibid., p. 307.

3. IX, pp. 128-129. (The Logic of Political Economy) De Quincey must have felt some uneasiness in using philosophical terms in this work, for he includes a long footnote explaining his use for fear that the "general reader might fancy reason for complaint in finding thus presupposed the knowledge of philosophy, - which in England is slightly extended."

4. Eric Partridge. Usage and Abusage. London: 1947, pp. 73, 286-291, 304-309; Slang Today and Yesterday. London: 1933, pp. 1-26, 80-108. For a full treatment of spoken English see Arthur Melville Clark's Spoken English. Edinburgh: 1946. Also helpful are H. C. K. Wyld's History of Modern Colloquial English, London: 1920, and G. H. Mc Knight's English Words and their Background. London: 1923.

informality. Secondly, on the next plane of usage is placed the colloquial,<sup>1</sup> that belonging to familiar and informal speech. Although the exact borderline between standard and colloquial English is impossible to determine, certain characteristics of the colloquial are recognized. These are (a) the use of terms belonging to familiar conversation, (b) a flexible syntax, (c) a fondness for sentences with a single verb, (d) the omission of "I" at the beginning of a sentence or a clause, (e) the rapid leaping from one subject to another, and (f) the use of contractions. Even when written, the colloquial is marked by the informality of familiar conversation. Thirdly, slang may be considered as standing just below colloquial, or regarded as "illegitimate colloquial speech".<sup>2</sup> Although "perhaps almost undefinable,"<sup>3</sup> slang is considered to be those ephemeral current expressions that have an arresting quality. Such expressions may be generally-accepted terms that are used in an unorthodox manner or new and striking terms that have been introduced into the language.

- 
1. "...the name applied to that large tract of English which lies between Standard English and slang; it is of a status higher than that of slang, and, at its highest, it is scarcely distinguishable from Familiar English (informal Standard English)." Usage and Abuse, p. 73.
  2. Partridge. Slang Today and Yesterday. op.cit., p. 3.
  3. Partridge. Usage and Abuse, op. cit., p. 286. Different authorities vary as to the exact level of slang. Partridge places it below the colloquial; the OED calls it "language of a highly colloquial type"; the concise OED makes a slightly different distinction in terming it "Words and phrases in common colloquial use, but generally considered in some or all of their senses to be outside of standard English..." But if the definitions are vague, the words themselves are usually quite obvious. For example, there is little doubt that "man" is standard English, "chap" colloquial, and "guy" slang. Most of De Quincey's terms are clear-cut although some of the expressions that he uses have now changed their level of usage.

De Quincey makes use of the highest level of language in his works of impassioned prose. The Confessions of an English Opium-eater, the Suspiria de Profundis, and those passages throughout his works that might be termed impassioned are presented in the most elevated standard English. The following passage is representative, for in it De Quincey uses formal prose that possesses a dignity and ornate richness that is characteristic of his works of the highest quality: -

"Among the powers in man which suffer by this too intense life of the social instincts, none suffers more than the power of dreaming. Let no man think this a trifle. The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy. And the dreaming organ, in connexion with the heart, the eye, and the ear, composes the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of that mysterious camera obscura - the sleeping mind."<sup>1</sup>

But some of DeQuincey's enduring writings are in standard English that is formal but not distinctively elevated. The vocabulary used is logical, accurate, and suitable to preciseness of meaning, but it does not possess the impassioned quality of De Quincey's most notable works. In the following example, De Quincey effectively uses standard

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1. XIII, p. 335. (Suspiria de Profundis) Mr. Partridge would classify such passages as being in "Literary Standard." He says, "Of Literary English - Literary Standard - it is necessary only to say that it is the more conventional, stylized, and dignified, more accurate and logical, sometimes the more beautiful form, that Received Standard assumes, like evening dress, for important occasions; it is also more rhythmical and musical. The prose of Sir Thomas Browne, Gibbon, De Quincey, The Landors, Pater is in Literary English. With dialect, colloquialism, slang, cant, it has nothing to do unless they possess a long pedigree - and then only in rare instances." Usage and Abusage, op. cit., p. 306. This statement is not quite accurate when all of De Quincey's writings are considered, for although his impassioned prose and his more formal passages are undoubtedly in Literary English, much that he has written has a great deal to do with the other kinds.



English, but the passage does not have the depth and richness of the quotation given on the preceding page: -

"A false religion furnished always a key to one subordinate lock; but a religion that is true will prove a master-key for all locks alike. This transcendental principle, through which Christianity transfers herself so readily from climate to climate, from land to land, from century to century, from the simplicity of shepherd to the utmost refinement of philosophers, carries with it a corresponding necessity (corresponding, I mean, to such infinite flexibility) of an infinite development. The Paganism of Rome, so flattering and so sustaining to the Roman nationality and pride, satisfied no spiritual necessity: dear to the Romans as citizens, it was at last killing to them as men"<sup>1</sup>

A great many of De Quincey's highly effective writings are presented less formally than the preceding passage. A paragraph from the Autobiography provides a notable example. But it is to be noted that the feeling of informality in the next passage arises from the use of the first person and the familiar air that such an autobiographical sketch possesses. The vocabulary used is that of standard English: -

"At Worcester College, therefore, I entered; and here arises the proper occasion for stating the true costs of an Oxford education. First comes the question of lodging. This item varies, as may be supposed; but my own case will place on record the two extremes of cost in one particular college, nowadays differing, I believe, from the general standard. The first rooms assigned me, being small and ill-lighted, as part of an old Gothic building, were charged at four guineas a year. These I soon exchanged for others a little better, and for them I paid six guineas. Finally by privilege of seniority, I obtained a handsome set of well-proportioned rooms, in a modern section of the college, charged at ten guineas a year."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. VIII, p. 309. (Protestantism)
  2. II, p. 29. (Autobiography)

In a similar manner, the following example contains the informality that arises from a rhetorical conversation with the reader, but the vocabulary is on the level of standard English: -

"....We shall endeavour to bring up our reader to the fence, and persuade him, if possible, to take the leap which still remains to be taken in this field of style. But as we have reason to fear that he will "refuse" it, we shall wheel him round and bring him up to it from another quarter, a gentle touch of the spur may then perhaps carry him over. Let not the reader take it to heart that we here represent him under the figure of a horse, and ourselves in a nobler character as riding him, and that we even take the liberty of proposing to spur him. Anything may be borne in metaphor. Figuratively, one may kick a man without offence...."<sup>1</sup>

The following passage is also of a conversational nature, but can not be said to be wholly colloquial. It does, however, contain some colloquial characteristics in (a) the abrupt shifting of subject, (b) the flexibility of its syntax, and (c) the fact that some of its sentences have a single verb.

"Reader, you are beginning to suspect us. "How long do we purpose to detain people?" For anything that appears we may be designing to write on to the twentieth century - for twice thirty years. "And whither are we going? towards what object?" - which is as urgent a quære as how far. Perhaps we may be leading you into treason, or (which indeed is pretty much the same thing) we may be paving the way to "Repeal." You feel symptoms of doubt and restiveness; and, like Hamlet with his father's ghost, you will follow us no further, unless we explain what it is that we are in quest of."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. X, p. 191. (Style)
  2. X, pp. 189-190. (Style)

The next illustration can, perhaps, be considered to be in that indefinite region that lies between standard and colloquial English. It is even more abrupt, more conversational, and more informal: -

"Here I am, viz. in vol. XV. Never ruffle your temper, reader, or mine, by asking how, and with what right. I am here. So much is clear, and what you may call a fait accompli. As to saying that, though I am maybe here "de Facto", "nevertheless "de jure" I am not so, - that I have no locus standi; that I am an usurper, an intruder; and that any contraband process by which I have smuggled myself from vol. XIV to this present vol. XV is not of a kind that bear looking into, - too true, I answer: very few things will bear looking into!"<sup>1</sup>

Viewed as single passages, the two preceding examples might be termed effective in that they are pleasant, slightly humorous introductions. But the difficulty arises from the frequent use that De Quincey makes of this same device, for similar passages occur with monotonous regularity in his writings. For example, the essay on Sir William Hamilton, from which the second illustration is taken, contains no less than seven of these same rather amiable mixtures of standard and colloquial English.

Although the exact limits of the colloquial are impossible to ascertain, there is no doubt that De Quincey has crossed over to the colloquial in the next example. Several characteristics might be noted: (a) the terms belonging to ordinary conversation, (b) the flexibility of the syntax, (c) the use of contractions, (d) the fondness for sentences containing a single verb, and (e) if not an actual leaping from one subject to another, an abruptness in the

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1. V. p. 318. (Sir William Hamilton)



presentation that creates much the same effect: -

"...Such a letter he receives from one Amazon, "when with terror he discovers in his heart most vivid traces of an inclination" for another Amazon. A man can't marry two Amazons. Well, thank Heaven! it's no scrape of ours. A german wit has brought us all into it; and a German denouement shall help us all out. Le Voici! There are two Amazons, the reader knows. Good; now one of these is ci-devant sweetheart to Lothario, the other his sister. What may prevent therefore that Meister shall have the sister, and Lothario (according to Horace's arrangement with Lydia) his old sweetheart? Nothing but this sweetheart's impatience...."1

The passage is representative of much that is unsuccessful in De Quincey's use of the colloquial. The humour, sometimes amiable and pleasant, is here sarcastic, heavy, and appears to be overdone. The conscious straining for effect fails to be amusing even in isolated passages, and when carried on throughout an entire work, is remarkably ineffectual. The review by De Quincey of Carlyle's Translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, from which the last illustration is taken, is a notable example, for almost the entire essay is a rather waspish conversation that is signally ineffective. X

Yet De Quincey's use of colloquial English is successful in Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts, as much of the macabre humour of the essay arises from the fact that murder is treated as if it were an everyday subject to be discussed in everyday terms. But De Quincey's use of the colloquial in this work is somewhat different from those previously discussed, for the prose passage is not colloquial in what might be called the syntactic elements: the flexibility of the syntax, the rapid shifting of the subject, and the

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1. XI, p. 255. (Goethe's Wilhelm Meister)

fondness for sentences with a single verb. Rather, the colloquial characteristics are (1) the use of contractions, (2) the use of terms belonging to familiar conversation and (3) a prosaic, matter-of-fact air that pervades the work: -

"...A golden mean is certainly what every man should aim at. But it is easier talking than doing; and my infirmity being notoriously too much mildness of heart, I find it difficult to maintain that steady equatorial line between the two poles of too much murder on the one hand and too little on the other. I am too soft; and people get excused through me - nay, go through life without an attempt made upon them - that ought not to be excused. I believe, if I had the management of things, there would hardly be a murder from year's end to year's end. In fact, I'm for virtue, and goodness, and all that sort of thing. And two instances I'll give you to what an extremity I carry my virtue. The first may seem a trifle; but not if you know my nephew, who was certainly born to be hanged, and would have been so long ago, but for my restraining voice. He is horribly ambitious, and thinks himself a man of cultivated taste in most branches of murder, whereas, if fact he has not one idea on the subject but such as he has stolen from me....."<sup>1</sup>

Not only does De Quincey use the colloquial but he also makes extensive use of slang. I find it revealing of his interest in vivid language and distinctiveness of expression that he is one of the few writers in the nineteenth century who spoke "well of slang"<sup>2</sup>; -

"...Other cases, again, there are, and at present far too abundant, in which the necessities of social intercourse, and not infrequently the necessities of philosophic speculation, are provisionally supplied by slang, and the phraseology that is born and bred in the streets. The market-place and the highway, the forum and the trivium, are rich seed-plots for the sowing and the reaping of many indispensable ideas. That a phrase belongs to the slang dictionary is certainly no absolute recommendation; sometimes such a phrase may be simply disgusting from its vulgarity, without adding anything to the meaning or to the rhetorical force....Yet neither is it any safe ground of

- 
1. Blackwood's Magazine, November, 1839, p. 645. (Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts)
  2. Partridge, Slang Today and Yesterday, p. 108, note.

absolute excommunication even from the sanctities of literature that a phrase is entirely a growth of the street. The word humbug, for instance, rests upon a rich and comprehensive basis: it cannot be rendered adequately either by German or by Greek, the two richest of human languages; and without this expressive word we should all be disarmed for one great case, continually recurrent, of social enormity."<sup>1</sup>

Although the vividness and humour that are integral parts of slang motivate De Quincey's general use of slang expressions, certain more specific features are evident. For example, De Quincey may (a) use a slang term in the midst of a passage that is in standard English and (b) use the term in a rather conscious and precise manner: -

"Sir J. Moore, and through him his gallant but unfortunate army, was the last conspicuous victim to the mere sound and humbug (if you will excuse a coarse expression) of the words Napoleon Bonaparte."<sup>2</sup>

Very often, De Quincey will sprinkle slang terms through a passage that is otherwise colloquial, as the terms "big-wig" and "big-gun" in the next example. It must be admitted that the rather forced jocularity is perhaps more painful than effective: -

"But, before we go farther, what are we to call this bold man?....There are three bishops in the field, Mr. H., and the Scotchman. That makes five. But every one of these, you say, is represented equally by the name in the title - "Phileleutherus Anglicanus." True, but that's as long as a team of horses. If it had but Esquire at the end, it would measure against a Latin Hexameter verse. I'm afraid we must come at last to Phil. I've been seeking to avoid it, for it's painful to say "Jack" or "Dick" either to or of an ecclesiastical big gun. But, if such big-wigs will come abroad in disguise....."<sup>3</sup>

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1. X, p. 247 (Language)
  2. V, p. 283. (Professor Wilson)
  3. VIII, p. 249-250. (Protestantism)

De Quincey may use an incongruous mixture of standard English, the colloquial, and slang. The combination is not usually effective, for De Quincey all too frequently mars the feelings and ideas of a fine passage by a sudden jarring descent into colloquial and slangy facetiousness. The following passage occurs in the midst of a serious consideration of Greek Literature: -

"....all this extent of obligation amongst later poets of Greece to Homer serves less to argue his opulence than their penury. And, if quitting the one great blazing jewel, the Urim and Thummim of the "Iliad," you descend to individual passages of poetic effect, and if amongst these a fancy should seize you of asking for a specimen of the sublime in particular, what is it that you are offered by the critics? Nothing that we remember beyond one single passage, in which the god Neptune is described in a steeplechase, and "making play" at a terrific pace. And certainly, enough is exhibited of the old boy's hoofs, and their spanking qualities, to warrant our backing him against a railroad for a rump and dozen; but after all, there is nothing to grow frisky about, as Longinus does, - who gets up the steam of a blue-stockings enthusiasm, and boils us a regular gallop of ranting, in which like the conceited snipe upon the Liverpool railroad, he thinks himself to run a match with Samson...."<sup>1</sup>

Occasionally, De Quincey will present a passage almost wholly in slang terms. Perhaps the most notable example is the account of the murder of the "Mannheim baker," in Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts. To secure humour, De Quincey has used the slang<sup>2</sup> of boxing. I give only a portion of the passage: -

"Round 19th. The baker came up piping, and manifestly the worse for wear. His geometrical exploits in the four last rounds had done him good. However, he showed some skill in stopping a message which I was sending to his cadaverous mug; in delivering which my foot slipped, and I went down.

- 
1. X, pp. 306-307. (A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature in its Foremost Pretensions)
  2. It should perhaps be considered a mixture of standard slang terms and jargon. Cf. Slang Today and Yesterday. pp. 235-236, Usage and Abusage, pp. 161-165.

Round 20th. Surveying the baker, I became ashamed of having been so much bothered by a shapless mass of dough; and I went in fiercely, and administered some severe punishment. A rally took place - both went down - baker undermost - ten to three on amateur.

Round 21st. The baker jumped up with surprising agility; indeed he managed his pins capitally, and fought wonderfully, considering that he was drenched in perspiration; but the shine was taken out of him, and his game was the mere effect of panic..."<sup>1</sup>

Although entire passages of slang are not found very often in De Quincey's writings, he may use individual words and expressions of a homely kind to emphasize a point in a humorous, but rather earthy way: -

"My advice to these villains is to remember the old argument "In for a penny, in for a pound." They are already up to the lips in guilt; let them therefore, like sensible reprobates, go the whole hog by patronising chloroform."<sup>2</sup>

A great many of De Quincey's slang expressions are standard slang terms of his time. He often uses effectively such expressions in a spirit of playfulness: -

"There goes a bounce," I said in an undertone; "the stars, it seems, can tell falsehoods as well as other people."<sup>3</sup>

"And, if ever it should be discovered that I had been "cooking the accounts" (as this sort of trespass is now technically termed by railway directors), all sensible men would see the policy of hushing up the matter..."<sup>4</sup>

- 
1. XIII, p. 41. (Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts)
  2. XIV, p. 290. (On the Religious Objections to the Use of Chloroform)
  3. XIII, p. 265. (Sortilege and Astrology)
  4. XIV, p. 298. (Memorial Chronology)



Some of his slang expressions are malicious. In the following examples, De. Quincey uses current slang phrases to sum up the character of Dr. Parr:<sup>1</sup>

"How did the "Birmingham Doctor" smoke? Not as you, or I, or other civilized people smoke, with a gentle cigar - but with the very coarsest tobacco."<sup>2</sup>

"The true name for this infirmity is, in the vulgar dialect, pig-headness. Stupid imperturable adherence, "deaf and blind, to some perverse view that abruptly thwarted and counteracted his party...that was the key to Dr. Parr's lingering preferment."<sup>3</sup>

Quite often he uses the slang of his day to make a passage more vigorous. The humour in the following passages is quite slight or entirely lacking: -

"My sleep was never no more than what is called a dog-sleep; so that I could hear myself moaning."<sup>4</sup>

"When Lin seized the British opium, and in one day pillaged our British merchants to the extent of more than two millions sterling, by what means was it that Lin got "a hank" over so much alien property?"<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, his public school and university slang is only slightly humorous, the terms giving only an informal note: -

"Spite of the public applauses, some ominous misgivings were muttered; one or two of the Boyle party began to "funk"; they augured no good from the dead silence of Bentley..."<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. To make his meaning quite clear, De Quincey added a footnote explaining that "Birmingham" refers to articles that are not genuine and that Dr. Parr is an imitation of Dr. Johnson.
  2. II, p. 208. (Literary Reminiscences)
  3. V, p. 36. (Dr. Samuel Parr)
  4. III, p. 355. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  5. XIV, p. 169. (The Opium Question with China in 1840)
  6. IV, p. 143. (Richard Bentley)

"Your notion was that I might be destined... to become a great authority on the science of Chronology; in which character...I might "crib" a thousand years or so from human records...." 1

Many of his slang words and phrases are Americanisms.<sup>2</sup> To De Quincey, some of these expressions possessed the humour of novelty: -

"Such rubbish - such "almighty" nonsense ( to speak trans atlanticè) - no eye has ever beheld as nine hundred and fifty, to say the least, of these thousand pages." 3

"...however "handy" this gold may lie in California or in Australia, however "sweetly" it may work off for those meritorious vagabonds who first break ground in the virgin fields, one thing is undeniable...." 4

He sometimes uses an Americanism to create what might be called the humour of incongruity. In the following passage, he uses an expression from the Southern United States to indicate the cost of a Pyrrhic victory: -

" \* One or two such victories,' said Pyrrhus the Epirot, 'and I am a gone coon!' " 5

But perhaps De Quincey's most successful Americanisms are those which present an idea in a vivid manner. The slang expression in the following passage is arresting in its description of those who hold land illegally: -

"...cannot but terminate in throwing upon the nation vast bankrupt estates occupied by a population of negro "squatters" ( I borrow the term from American to express a corresponding nuisance...." 6

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1. XIV, p. 298. (Memorial Chronology)
  2. See Robert E. Hollinger. De Quincey's Use of Americanisms, AS XXIII, (1948), pp. 204-209.
  3. XIV, p. 137. (Walladmor)
  4. IX, p. 403. (California and the Gold-Digging Mania)
  5. Ibid., p. 404.
  6. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS (Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life)



Although De Quincey will occasionally take a term from thieves' cant, I have not found that he uses the cant in any distinctive manner. Almost always the underworld expressions are used to provide a touch of novelty: -

"...a trick then newly introduced amongst robbers, and termed hocussing, i.e., clandestinely drugging the liquor of the victim with laudanum."<sup>1</sup>

"I have always looked upon this fine...as a sort of honorarium, entrance money, - what in jail used to be known as smart money...."<sup>2</sup>

De Quincey's competent use of dialect is confined to single words and short phrases, often those taken from the dialect of the Lake country. These he presents in a precise and scholarly manner:-<sup>3</sup>

"In one of its many rocky recesses is seen a "force" (such is the local name for a cataract), white with foam, descending at all seasons with considerable strength..."<sup>4</sup>

".....a slender hope had sprung up that some hovel or sheep-fold might have furnished them a screen (or, in Westmorland phrase, a biel) against the weather quarter of the storm..."<sup>5</sup>

He occasionally uses a Scottish term.<sup>6</sup> He notes one that is common to both Scotland and Westmorland: -

"And "what-like"- to use a Westmorland as well as Scottish expression - "what-like" was Wordsworth?"<sup>7</sup>

- 
1. XIII, p. 119. (Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts)
  2. III, p. 345. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  3. The dialect of the Lake country was one of his interests, as shown in his Danish Origin of the Lake-Country Dialect, XIII, pp. 373-383.
  4. XIII, p. 127. (Memorials of Grasmere)
  5. XIII, pp. 135-136. (Memorials of Grasmere)
  6. In this connection, it is to be noted that he correctly detected the Scottish origin of an anonymous publication. VIII, pp. 244-246. (Protestantism) and Masson's note, p. 244.
  7. II, p. 241. (The Lake Poets: William Wordsworth)

De Quincey will also coin words and phrases, usually to add a humorous touch to a passage: -

"We might call a man in the circumstances of Mr. Stewart, viz., one who has walked round the terra firma of the globe, from Nantschatka to Paraguay, and from Paraguay to Lapland, a circumeripatetic (or, if the reader objects to this sort of tautology in the circum and the peri, a circumambulator)."<sup>1</sup>

"..he and Monsieur knew and recoiled from each other. They met, they saw, they inter-despised."<sup>2</sup>

"But, observe, he shuffles in his story according to his state of civilization".<sup>3</sup>

As I have shown, much of the humour and charm of some of De Quincey's writings arises from his use of colloquial language and slang expressions. The prose flows freely; and the slang terms are vivid, have now been taken into general use, or have acquired a patina from time which renders them unobjectionable. But pretty often De Quincey's use of colloquial and slang expressions is remarkably ineffective. Some passages, even whole articles, accomplish very little and seem to be nothing more than purposeless foolery.

In discussing this feature of De Quincey's writings, Mr. Sackville West points out that many articles in Blackwood's Magazine contain very much the same kind of "tasteless flippancy."<sup>4</sup> Possibly De Quincey felt that facetiousness was at least acceptable, if not

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1. III, p. 94. (Walking Stewart)

2. II, p. 378. (Society of the Lakes)

3. III, p. 53. (Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts)

"Civilization," "civilisation" as pronounced by an intoxicated man, is used several times by De Quincey, who gives at one place his own formal definition: "Civilization, by ellipsis, or more properly, by syncope, or, rigorously speaking, by hiccup, from civilisation."

V, p. 321 (Sir William Hamilton)

4. Sackville West, op. cit., p. 241.

expected. In addition, since he was a regular contributor to the magazine, he might have been under the compulsion that arises when a writer has established a reputation for a certain kind of cleverness. Moreover, although he needed badly the money that his writings brought him, he always had difficulty in meeting publishing deadlines. It is not then surprising that in an effort to get an acceptable article in at the last moment, De Quincey resorted to writing material that depended for much of its appeal on a superficial informal cleverness.

Emphasis

For the purpose of this part of the thesis, emphasis is taken to mean the making more intense or more significant a feeling, an expression, an idea, or an action.<sup>1</sup> At this point, I am primarily concerned with De Quincey's methods of using words and phrases in order to secure emphasis.<sup>2</sup>

De Quincey often secures emphasis by using a series of words and phrases. Although this device is found in emphatic passages throughout his works, the series, usually used to achieve an emotional impact, is most apparent in writings dealing with the fanciful and unusual. In the Confessions, his apostrophe to opium provides several striking examples: -

"O just, subtle, and all-conquering opium! that, to the hearts of rich and poor alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for the pangs of grief that "tempt the spirit to rebel," bringest an assuaging balm; - eloquent opium! that thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath, pleasest effectually for relenting pity, and through one night's sleep, callest back to the guilty man the visions of his infancy, and hands washed pure from blood; - O just and righteous opium! that to the chancery of dreams summonest, for the triumphs of despairing innocence, false witnesses, and confoundest perjury, and dost reverse the sentence of unrighteous judges..."<sup>3</sup>

In the passage just quoted, the feeling expressed becomes more intense as the piece proceeds and rises, as it were, to a peak, and the passage becomes more emphatic as it goes along. The following passage, also

- 
1. This excludes (a) emphasis by means of a spoken stress on words, and (b) emphasis achieved by means of figures of speech.
  2. Emphasis through the arrangement of words as part of a sentence unit (in a periodic sentence, for example) is discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.
  3. III, p. 395.

from the Confessions, is another illustration: -

"I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquet, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Orsiris; I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I have lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud."<sup>1</sup>

In a very similar manner, De Quincey may use a series to deepen almost any emotion and make it more vivid. In the following passage, the feeling of quietness and peacefulness is partly the result of the skillful handling of a series of emotive nouns and participles: -

"From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night - from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight - from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love..."<sup>2</sup>

The emotional quality of the following passage arises from De Quincey's using a series of phrases to expand the image: -

"Thither, lured by the loveliness of cerulean depths, by the peace of human dwellings privileged from molestation, by the gleam of marble altars sleeping in everlasting sanctity, oftentimes in dreams did I and the Dark Interpreter cleave the watery veil that divided us from her streets."<sup>3</sup>

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1. III, pp. 442-443.

2. XIII, p. 318. (The Vision of Sudden Death)

3. Ibid., p. 360. (Suspiria de Profundis)

In a similar manner, he expands an idea or elaborates a description: -

"I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, alleys without soundings, such enigmatical entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without obvious outlets or thoroughfares, as must baffle the audacity of porters and confound the intellects of hackney coachmen."<sup>1</sup>

"He had that sort of military courage which was, and is, more common than weeds. In all else he was a low-minded man, vulgar in his thoughts, most unprincely in his habits. He was even worse than that: wicked, brutal, sensually cruel."<sup>2</sup>

"On the contrary, every part of nature - mechanics, dynamics, morale, metaphysics, and even pure mathematics - are continually giving the lie flatly by their facts and conclusions to the very necessities and laws of the human understanding."<sup>3</sup>

"The truth is now becoming more palpable; certain great situations - not passion in states of growth, of movement, of self-conflict - but fixed, unmoving situations were selected."<sup>4</sup>

He may list various groups or classes in a series in order to emphasize distinctive qualities: -

"To organise these efforts and direct them to proper objects, he projected a society - composed of the noble, the enlightened, and the learned...."<sup>5</sup>

"A fretful or peevish cry cannot be any efforts make itself impassioned. The cry of impatience, of hunger, of irritation, of reproach, of alarm, are all different - different as a chorus of Beethoven from a chorus of Mozart."<sup>6</sup>

He may list also similar groups or classes: -

"Henceforth the quarrels of Greece were conducted in a civil way by cabals, intrigues, diplomacy, tongue licence, and occasionally by assassination."<sup>7</sup>

- 
1. III, p. 393. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  2. Posth Works, I, p. 144. (France Past and France Present)
  3. VII, p. 180. (Secret Societies)
  4. X, p. 349. (The Theory of Greek Tragedy)
  5. XIII, p. 407. (Rosicrucians and Free-Masons)
  6. Posth Works, I, p. 11. (Suspiria de Profundis)
  7. Blackwood's Magazine. MSS. (The Greek Revolution, Part III)



Repetition for emphasis is a favourite device of De Quincey's. But as he also uses repetition to link thoughts or emotions together, he frequently combines the emphatic and connective uses. He also quite often uses repetition in conjunction with other devices ( such as parallelism) to make an image more vivid or to broaden a concept. Throughout The English Mail Coach repetition for both intensification and connection is used so frequently that it appears as one of the most obvious devices in that essay: -

"Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments - they hurry. Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses - they also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for him, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to his command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's forefeet upon the crown or arching centre of the road."<sup>1</sup>

Especially worthy of note in this work is De Quincey's repetition of the participles, "fainting, praying, raving, despairing."<sup>2</sup> This series (with some internal changes, however) appears, first, in The Vision of Sudden Death in the account of the actual event, and, secondly, throughout the Dream Fugue in the descriptions of various female figures. De Quincey uses the series of participles not only to deepen the mood but also to connect the two sections of the work.

Again, the Confessions provides a slightly different example of repetition ( in combination with a series) as a means of intensification: -

"...now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to reveal itself; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens; faces, imploring, wrathful, despairing; faces that surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations; infinite was my

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1. XIII, p. 316. (The English Mail Coach)

2. See page 137, note.



agitation; my mind tossed, as it seemed, upon the billowy ocean, and weltered upon the weltering waves."<sup>1</sup>

The Following passage, also from the Confessions, is another illustration of repetition for emphasis and transition: -

"The main phenomenon by which opium expressed itself permanently, and the sole phenomenon that was communicable, lay in the dreams (and in the peculiar dream-scenery) which followed the opium excesses. But naturally these dreams, and this dream-scenery, drew their outlines and materials - their great lights and shadows - from those profound revelations which had been ploughed so deeply into the heart..<sup>2</sup>"

In a similar manner, he emphasizes a point in an argumentative passage: -

"Here is the mortal ulcer of Islamism, which can never cleanse itself from death and the odour of death. A political ulcer would or might have found restoration for itself; but this ulcer is higher and deeper: - it lies in the religion, which is incapable of reform: it is an ulcer reaching as high as the paradise which Islamism promises, and deep as the hell which it creates."<sup>3</sup>

He may vary either the form or the order of the words repeated: -

"...feeling profoundly what he had communicated, and anticipating the profoundest sympathy with all that he uttered...."<sup>4</sup>

"....will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw her arms wildly to heaven..."<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes the emphatic quality is very slight, the repetition being designed almost solely for the purpose of connection: -

"...the deciphering intellect of man was first of all opened by the spirit of Christianity. Christianity, for instance,

- 
1. III, p. 441.
  2. III, p. 413.
  3. VII, p. 275. (Greece under the Romans)
  4. I, p. 309. (My Brother Pink)
  5. XIII, p. 317. (The Vision of Sudden Death)



brings to bear seasonably upon some opening, offered by a new phasis in the aspects of society, a new and kindling truth. This truth...is prodigiously expanded by human experience..."<sup>1</sup>

"....the original motive for translating one book rather than another, is, that the public curiosity has been already attracted to it, either directly on its own account, or from some personal interest which has settled upon its author. This curiosity...exonerates the translator from all responsibility as a selector."<sup>2</sup>

De Quincey sometimes secures emphasis by what might be called the cumulative effect of massing words or phrases in a passage. The emphatic quality arises not so much from the arrangement or repetition as from the total number of words or phrases. The intensification is the result of clustering similar or allied ideas or emotions around a central element: -

"...It is fit that to every organ through which the constitution acts or is acted upon a vigilant jealousy should be directed. This jealousy cannot, by any possibility, be rendered so keen and effective if lodged comprehensively and indiscriminately, for all parts of the constitution, in the same general hands, charged alternately with the duty of repressing the Crown and People, as it would be if assigned dramatically, by separate parts and castings, to separate agents."<sup>3</sup>

"It became afterwards, on recollection, a heart-chilling remembrance to herself that, precisely as she emerged from the shop-door, she noticed, on the opposite side of the street, by the light of the lamps, a man's figure; stationary at the instant, but in the next instant slowly moving."<sup>4</sup>

However, this method is seen more clearly in its negative aspect; that is, when it fails to achieve emphasis; and in De Quincey's works

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1. VIII, p. 301. (Protestantism)
  2. Gillie's German Stories, Blackwood's Magazine. (December, 1826) p. 843.
  3. IX, p. 373. (Political Parties of Modern England)
  4. XIII, p. 83. (Murder as one of the Fine Arts)

the method not seldom fails. Too often there is an almost indiscriminate heaping of loosely connected elements. De Quincey, instead of focussing his effect, spreads it by his lack of unity or coherence, or both: -

"The very narrowness of a man's claims, by making them definite and appreciable, is an advantage. Not merely a leader in a branch of art which presupposes a high sense of beauty, a cultivated taste, and other gifts properly intellectual, but even in some art presuming little beyond manual dexterity, is sure of his election into the exclusive circles."<sup>1</sup>

"But in a world where mercenary considerations do and must largely prevail, where respect and consideration are so powerfully dependant upon the means which each man enjoys, be he layman or be he churchman, of dispensing charity, maintaining hospitality, and otherwise of surrounding himself with the decorums of his rank, - folly only or rank villainy could exact from one order an insulated system of self-denying austerity, to which no one feature in the existing temper of any other order is accomodated, and which the ruling spirit of manners would consign to instant and general ridicule."<sup>2</sup>

De Quincey also uses a purely artificial device as a means of emphasis; he italicizes words and phrases that should be brought more forcibly to the attention of the reader. This practice is so common throughout his works that it constitutes one of his most distinctive characteristics: -

"The first proposition is that war cannot be abolished; the second, and more offensive, that war ought not to be abolished."<sup>3</sup>

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1. III, p. 17. (London Reminiscences)
  2. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS (Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life.)
  3. VIII, p. 374. (On War)

Parts of Speech

De Quincey's use of the parts of speech shows two highly distinctive features: (1) He uses relatively few finite verbs.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of the finite verbs to the total number of words in the sentence is comparatively small. (2) He makes extensive use of the nouns and the adjectives, often piling them up in long involved groups.<sup>2</sup>

The small number of finite verbs arises from the length of De Quincey's sentences.<sup>3</sup> De Quincey uses long sentences, the result of what might be termed his "associational thinking." One idea brings to De Quincey's mind a related idea; the second idea suggests a third, and so on until an elaborate structure is built. Because he throws these additional ideas frequently into phrases, he uses few finite verbs in proportion to the total number of words in a sentence.

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1. L.A.Sherman, Some Observations upon the Sentence-Length in English Prose, Lincoln: 1888, p. 125, and On Certain Facts and Principles in the Development of Form in Literature, Lincoln: 1892, p. 21. G.W.Gerwig, On the Decrease of Predication and of Sentence Weight in English Prose, Lincoln: 1894, pp. 7 and 28. These extensive studies on sentence length and the number of predications per sentence indicate that the proportion of finite verbs is considerably smaller in De Quincey's works than in the works of his contemporaries. My own statistics based on the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death indicate the same thing.
  2. Other parts of speech are not used in a highly distinctive manner or are discussed in other places in this thesis, notably, adverbs and exclamations in Inversion (pp. 169-182) and conjunctions in Transitional Elements (pp. 158-168).
  3. See Chapter Two, Part One. Sentence Length (pp. 96-99).

The relatively small number of finite verbs and the preponderance of the nouns and the adjectives are shown in the following passages: -

"At a time when every week sees the town banker drawn from our rural gentry, railway directors in every quarter transferring themselves indifferently from town to country, from country to town, lawyers, clergymen, medical men, magistrates, local judges, etc., all shifting in and out between town and country; rural families all intermarrying on terms of the widest freedom with town families; all again, in the persons of their children, meeting for study at the same schools, colleges, military academies, etc.: by what furious forgetfulness of the realities belonging to the case has it been possible for writers in public journals to persist in arguing national questions upon the assumption of a bisection in our population - a double current, on the one side steeped to the lips in town prejudices, on the other side traditionally sold to rustic views and doctrines?"<sup>1</sup>

"Rome was ravaged by a pestilence - by a famine - by riots amounting to a civil war - by a dreadful massacre of the unarmed mob - by shocks of earthquake - and, finally, by a fire which consumed the national bank, and the most sumptuous buildings of the city. To these horrors, with a rapidity of characteristic of Roman depravity, and possible only under the most extensive demoralization of the public mind, succeeded festivals of gorgeous pomp, and amphitheatrical exhibitions upon a scale of grandeur absolutely unparalleled by all former attempts."<sup>2</sup>

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1. I, p. 345. (Autobiography)
  2. VI, pp. 366-367. (The Caesars)



A writer who uses few finite verbs and a great many other elements in a sentence will emphasize the quality of his finite verbs if (a) the verbs have a quality sufficiently strong to be emphasized, and (b) if the other elements in the sentence are so ordered that they relate to the finite verb. But by casting his important words into noun and adjective phrases and by using finite verbs that are weak in thought or emotion, De Quincey often does the opposite. He lessens the quality of the finite verb and concentrates the thought of the sentence in the substantive elements. The contrast between the quality of the substantive elements and their modifiers and the finite verbs is exemplified by the next quotations. The second sentence in the first example is especially to be noted in that the finite verb ("is") will not bear the weight of the preceding elements: -

"The very narrowness of a man's claims, by making them definite and appreciable, is an advantage. Not merely a leader in a branch of art which presupposes a high sense of beauty, a cultivated taste, and other gifts properly intellectual, but even in some art presuming little beyond manual dexterity, is sure of his election into the exclusive circles."<sup>1</sup>

"This motion they had seen no cause to disobey, presuming their dismissal to be according to the mode which best pleased his Highness, and not ill-pleased at finding so peaceful a termination to a summons which at first from its mysterious shape and the solemn hour of night, they had understood as tending to some more formidable issue."<sup>2</sup>

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1. III, p. 17. (London Reminiscences)
  2. XII, p. 76. (Klosterheim)

The Contrast between the quality of De Quincey's nouns and adjectives and his finite verbs is the most apparent in his emotive words:<sup>1</sup> words that express emotion or produce an emotional response in the reader. The more emotional the passage, the more the emotive nouns and adjectives predominate, for De Quincey often makes little use of emotive finite verbs even in passages that are highly emotional. He does not make distinctive use of the other parts of speech that are capable of receiving an emotional charge.

His dependence on emotive nouns and adjectives is shown in the following passage; it occurs in his Autobiography and gives De Quincey's emotion at the sight of the corpse of his sister: -

"...From the gorgeous sunlight I turned round to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure; there the angel face, and as people usually fancy it was said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not? The forehead, indeed - the serene and noble forehead - that might be the same; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the stiffening hands, laid palm

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1. I have used the term given by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards in The Meaning of Meaning. New York: 1936. (4th ed.), but the sub-divisions they make are not necessary here. Stephen Ullmann in Words and Their Use. London: 1951, p. 43, makes a distinction that is applicable: "Language...can be put to two uses. It can convey factual statements and objective arguments; its purpose will then be purely communicative. But it can have a predominantly emotive and dynamic function: that of expressing or arousing feelings and of influencing behaviour." I realize that emotive words may vary according to the response of the individual, but I think that the examples I have chosen are fairly clear cut. For instance, in the passage quoted from De Quincey, "turned" has no emotional implications, but "sweet childish figure" obviously not only has an emotional implication to De Quincey but also will arouse an emotional response in most readers.



to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish - could these be mistaken for life? Had it been so, wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with tears and never-ending kisses? But so it was not. I stood checked for a moment; awe, not fear, fell upon me; and whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow - the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries. Many times since, upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn Memnonian, but saintly swell: it is in this world the one great audible symbol of eternity..."<sup>1</sup>

Highly emotional as this passage is, the finite verbs are remarkably lacking in qualities that either express De Quincey's emotion or arouse the emotions of the reader: -

"turned,"  
"lay,"  
"fancy,"  
"was said,"  
"had suffered,"  
"had,"  
"might be,"  
"seemed,"  
"could be mistaken,"  
"had been,"  
"did spring,"  
"was,"  
"stood,"  
"fell,"  
"stood,"  
"began,"  
"heard,"  
"was,"  
"might have swept,"  
"is,"  
"have remarked,"  
"is."

Of this group perhaps only "had suffered" might be said to have any emotional connotation or surcharge.

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1. I, pp. 40-41. (Autobiography)

In contrast, I have listed the emotionally toned nouns and adjectives: -

"gorgeous sunlight,"  
"sweet childish figure,"  
"angel face,"  
"serene and noble forehead,"  
"frozen eyelids,"  
"darkness,"  
"marble lips,"  
"stiffening hands,"  
"supplications,"  
"closing anguish,"  
"heavenly lips,"  
"tears,"  
"never-ending kisses,"  
"awe,"  
"fear,"  
"solemn wind,"  
"saddest,"  
"mortality,"  
"hollow,"  
"solemn Memnonian,"  
"but saintly swell,"  
"one great audible symbol,"  
"eternity."

Perhaps "corpse" might be added to this list and "darkness" left out of it. But with or without these two words, the list is an impressive one.

Sometimes De Quincey's finite verbs contribute so little to the emotional intensity of a passage that they appear to be used mainly as connectives.<sup>1</sup> That is, they express or arouse little or no emotion but tie the different sections together. The following

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1. Cf. Vernon Lee. The Handling of Words. London: 1923. p. 139. One function of a finite verb is, of course, to connect elements in a sentence, but De Quincey sometimes makes connection almost the only function of a finite verb.

passage illustrates this point: -

"The listening for hours to the sounds from horses' hoofs upon distant roads, rising and falling, caught and lost, upon the gentle undulation of such fitful airs as might be stirring - the peculiar solemnity of the hours succeeding to sunset - the glory of the dying day - the gorgeousness which, by description, so well I knew of sunset in those West Indian islands from which my father was returning - the knowledge that he returned only to die - the almighty pomp in which this great idea of Death apparelled itself to my young sorrowing heart - the corresponding pomp in which the antagonistic idea, not less mysterious, of life, rose, as if on wings, amidst tropic glories and floral pageantries, that seemed even more solemn and pathetic than the vapoury plumes and trophies of mortality - all this chorus of restless images, or of suggestive thoughts, gave to my father's return, which else had been fitted only to interpose one transitory red-letter day in the calendar of a child, the shadowy power of an ineffaceable agency among my dreams."<sup>1</sup>

Here again, the nouns and adjectives are highly emotive and the finite verbs lacking in emotive quality. More than that, with the possible exception of "apparelled," the finite verbs do not make stronger any emotional elements in the passage, but act simply as connectives: they carry the thought from one group of emotive nouns to the next group. "Gave," the main verb in the sentence, is used only as a bridge over which to pass to the last cluster of nouns and adjectives.

But the feeling in the passage is intensified in an amazing manner by the echoing and re-echoing of similar emotive ideas by the nouns and adjectives. The general idea in the first words of

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1. I. pp. 57-58. (Autobiography)

the sentence is echoed in "peculiar solemnity" in the next phrase. "Sunset" reappears in the "glory of the dying day," which in turn recurs in the "gorgeousness...of sunset in those West Indian islands." In "knowledge that he returned only to die," the infinitive "to die" is an echo of the earlier "dying day," and the "great idea of Death" is a re-echo of the same general idea. The next section, beginning with "the corresponding pomp" and consisting of a phrase and two clause, is quite involved in its combination of emotive elements. "Corresponding pomp...of life " is the contrasting idea to "almighty pomp in which this great idea of Death apparelled itself." The contrast is carried further in "the antagonistic idea, not less mysterious" and is repeated in the contrasting ideas of "tropic glories and floral pageantries" and "vapoury plumes and trophies of mortality." An echo of the "West Indian Islands" is heard in "tropic glories and floral pageantries." <sup>1</sup> The earlier "peculiar solemnity" reappears in "solemn and pathetic." The entire series is summed up generally in "all this chorus of restless images, or of suggestive thoughts," which is carried over by "gave" to the concluding idea, "the shadowy power of an ineffaceable agency among my dreams."

A different aspect of De Quincey's practice is seen in his use of verbids, a general term which I shall use in this thesis to designate verbal nouns, verbal adjectives, and infinitives.

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1. Perhaps the "West Indian islands" suggested the phrase to De Quincey, who then applied it to the "pomp of life."

Verbs thus refer to the non-finite forms of the verb except those which are an integral part of a "sentence building verb," such as "running" in the sentence "She was running."<sup>1</sup>

Though there are no emotive finite verbs in the last passage analysed, there are some emotive verbs. De Quincey may use verbs (a) to show movement and (b) to express the emotion arising from that movement. His usage in respect of verbs tends to centre the movement shown or the emotion expressed on the substantive elements in the passage.

An analysis of the general function of a verb in a sentence may help to clarify this point. For example, the sentence "The girl runs" contains two major elements: the doer of the action, "girl," and the action that is being done, "runs." The sentence may be said to possess (a) a substantive quality and (b) a verbal quality. But if the finite verb "runs" is changed to a verb and the sentence to the phrase "the running girl," these qualities are altered. The substantive quality has been increased since "running" has primarily an adjectival sense in that it describes one aspect of "girl." The verbal quality has been reduced because the action is incomplete and is subordinate to the modifying function of the adjective "running." Consequently, although the sentence "The girl runs" possesses both substantive and verbal qualities in equal proportions, the change to the phrase "the running girl" leaves a very strong substantive, and a very slight verbal, quality.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Otto Jespersen. The Philosophy of Grammar. London: 1924., p. 87.

2. Ibid. Ch. VII, pp. 96-99; Ch. VIII, pp. 108-116. Jespersen would call "The girl runs" with its separable but linked qualities, an example of nexus; "the running girl" an example of junction.

Then any emotive elements that such a verbid possesses would mostly concern the substantive quality of the phrase. This is true although the emotive element in a verbid arises from the action that the verbid expresses. For instance, when De Quincey speaks of the "maddening billows," he includes in the phrase both the sense of the restlessness of the waves and a feeling of the maliciousness arising from that movement. But the emotive quality is centred on the noun in that "maddening" describes an aspect of "billows."

"Think of me as one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered."<sup>1</sup>

The verbids with which the sentence ends express emotion in combination with movement. But the emotive quality of the verbids is focussed on De Quincey himself ("one") by the reference of the verbids to the word they modify. The reader's attention, here quite consciously introduced by "think of me," is also directed to the substantive elements in the sentence.

The following passage contains both emotion and movement. The verbids, as well as the emotive nouns and adjectives, direct the emotive quality of the passage toward the substantive elements. But the part played by the finite verb "leaped" is important in that (a) it is not a strongly emotive word but a verb strongly expressing movement, and (b) the sense of movement is increased by the other elements in the sentence.

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1. III, p. 447. (The Confessions of an English Opium Eater)



"From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night - from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight - from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love - suddenly as from the woods and fields - suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation - suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice."<sup>1</sup>

The passage shows De Quincey's high degree of skill in handling movement and emotion. The sentence may be divided into three main parts. The first, which ends with "murmuring love," is heavily emotive as almost every word contains an emotional implication. But the emotive verbids add something more. "Pathetic blending" gives a sense of quiet movement, and "whispering," "flattering," and "murmuring" present low-voiced sound.<sup>2</sup>

The second part, three phrases each introduced by the adverb "suddenly," almost entirely concerns movement. Perhaps "opening in revelation" and "yawning" may have some emotive qualities, but the chief purpose of this part is to present a contrast to the previous one and to lead to the action of the finite verb. It is to be noted that all of the six long phrases in the first two parts of the sentence build the movement up to "leaped," which then fairly hurls the thought across to the concluding section. The finite verb here is not crushed by the weight of the previous phrases, nor is it simply a means of connecting one series of thoughts to another but is

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1. XIII, pp. 318-319. (The Vision of Sudden Death)

2. Cf. Auditory Imagery, Chapter Five, pp. 254-255.

intensified and made more forceful by the preceding elements.

The final section is climactic. The verbid phrase "flashing of cataracts" continues the movement to the emotive words, "Death," "crowned phantom," "terrors," and "tiger roar," which contrast the violence and noise of the last section with the quiet movement of the opening words.

De Quincey has made a division between the various parts of the sentence; the emotive words are almost entirely confined to the first and last sections, and the words expressing movement cluster around the finite verb. The verbids show incomplete movement, and are chiefly concerned with the building up of the emotive substantive elements in the passage.

A somewhat different example of De Quincey's practice is provided by the following passage. The division between emotion and movement is not so apparent. The passage, taken from the Dream Fugue, (a) expresses emotion by means of nouns and adjectives, including verbids, (b) expresses movement by means of finite verbs and verbids, and (c) contains no emotive finite verbs of movement: -

"As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert places of the sea; whilst still by sight I

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1. The distinction might be made between finite verbs of movement and emotive finite verbs. For example, the finite verb "is" is not a verb of movement nor an emotive verb. It expresses simply the idea of existence, a state of being, without any motion or emotional implications. The finite verb "runs" is a verb of movement, but not an emotive verb. Motion is expressed, but there is no emotion connected with it. On the other hand, "grovels" is both a verb of movement and an emotive verb. It expresses not only movement but also has an emotional implication connected with that movement: the abasement implied by the act of groveling.

followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling, - rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying...."<sup>1</sup>

The emotion expressed in the passage might be said to be the sympathy felt by De Quincey<sup>2</sup> for the helplessness of the "lady of the pinnacle," who is pursued by malignant forces.<sup>3</sup> The expression of emotion depends on a few heavily emotive words and phrases whose emotive qualities are transferred, as it were, to words and phrases less emotive or not emotive at all. Taking the passage sentence by sentence, I shall attempt to show this process at work: -

"As she (the ship) ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle."

The emotional implications of this sentence are very slight. "Ran" indicates only movement; "stood" shows a contrast to movement.

"The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her."

The noun "malice" and the adjective "fierce" are the two most emotive words. But even without these, the sentence contains some emotive qualities.

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1. XIII, p. 320.
  2. Depending on the individual response, there should be either a corresponding feeling or an understanding of sympathy (based on similar experiences) aroused in the reader.
  3. I realize that this is an over-simplification. Other emotional implications may exist: De Quincey's own flight from reality; the identification of the lady of the pinnacle with Ann of Oxford Street (among others).

"The deeps opened ahead to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows tried to catch her."

Yet the malignant element expressed by "malice" and "fierce" has almost been lost altogether. The suggestion of fear may be carried on and implied by the fact of pursuit. But even that emotion is not certain, for the direct opposite might be implied:

"The deeps opened ahead to receive her (in sanctuary), towering surges of foam ran after her (to rescue her), the billows tried to catch her (to save her)."

The malignity of "malice" is carried over to "the towering surges of foam ran after her" and then is deepened by the hostility of "fierce." In a similar manner, the "desert places of the sea" is altered by the emotive quality of the previous phrase. "Desert places" are then not simply "solitary places" (with the implication of loneliness), but "hostile solitary places." The hostility is next made more violent by the emotive phrases, "howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and maddening billows."

"still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind."

In themselves, these words express a great deal of movement, but no emotion. The next sentence contains emotive words, however.

"There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling, rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying..."

The emotive words are "fluttering" (helplessly), "trembling" (with fear), and "praying" (for aid). "Dishevelled" and "clutched" are somewhat less emotive but contain the implication of fright. These last five words are in contrast to the earlier emotive words. "Malice," "fierce," "howling gale," "angry sea-birds," "maddening billows" all indicate the violence of the pursuer. The last emotive words show the fear of the pursued. By presenting both aspects, De Quincey intensifies both emotions.

De Quincey's treatment of emotive words may be seen even more clearly in the revisions he made in the Dream Fugue. From the many changes that he made, it is evident that he was painstaking in his efforts to secure the exact impression he desired. His corrections, as well as his initial choice of words, indicate his desire to emphasize the emotive nouns and adjectives and his lack of concern over the verbs.

In order to illustrate this aspect of his style in more detail, I have included at this point four different, but incomplete, versions of the Dream Fugue. These are (1) a fragment<sup>1</sup> of Part Four found among De Quincey's papers after his death and published by A. H. Japp in The Posthumous Works of Thomas De Quincey, V. I., pp. 323-325, (2) the manuscript of the Dream Fugue submitted to Blackwood's Magazine,<sup>2</sup> (3) the article as it was printed in Blackwood's Magazine (December, 1849, pp. 750-755), and (4) the article as it was printed in the Author's Edition, V. II, pp. 345-355. The changes made are shown by underlining in each column the differences between it and the preceding one. Where more than one change has been made in a word or passage in the manuscript, I have placed the additional revisions in round brackets. I have placed De Quincey's own brackets and italics in red. My own comments are in square brackets.

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1. This was apparently composed earlier than the corresponding passages in the Blackwood's Magazine manuscript.
  2. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS (incomplete after the first four parts).



Dream-Fugue  
on the above theme of sudden death

Tumultuosissimamente

Passion of Sudden Death! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the light of thy averted\* signs, Rapture of panic taking the shape, which in churches (monuments) I have seen, of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds - of woman's Ionic form in act to soar from the ruins of her grave, with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasping adoring hands, waiting, watching, listening, trembling, praying for the trumpet's call to rise from dust forever; Vision too fearful of shuddering humanity (Vision cursed with marble grandeur), that didst start aside, then recoil, that didst reel away, like a shrivelling scroll from the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind; - oh wherefore, epilepsy so brief (so transient) of horror; canst thou not die? Wherefore is it that now for thirty years, thou sheddest perennial blights (sad blights) amongst the gorgeous mosaics of dreams? Yes, yes, I ask - Fragment of music too stern, heard once and heard no more, wherefore is it now for thirty years thy deep rolling chords come up through all the worlds of sleep, and after thirty years, have lost no element of horror?

\* "Averted signs" - I read the course and process of the lady's agony in the succession of her attitudes and involuntary gestures; but read it all from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile most imperfectly.

Dream-Fugue  
on the above theme of sudden death

Tumultuosissimamente

Passion of Sudden Death! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted\* signs; - Rapture of panic taking the shape, which amongst tombs in churches I have seen, of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds - of woman's Ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave, with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped adoring hands - waiting, watching, trembling, praying, for the trumpet's call to rise from dust forever; - Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of abysses! vision that didst start back - that didst reel away - like a shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of the wind! Epilepsy so brief of horror - wherefore is it that thou canst not die? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of dreams? Fragment of music too stern, heard once and heard no more, what aileth thee that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after thirty years have lost no element of horror?

\* "Averted signs" - I read the course and changes of the lady's agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures; but let it be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile imperfectly.

Author's Edition

Dream-Fugue  
on the above theme of sudden death

Tumultuosissimamente

Passion of Sudden Death! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted\* signs; - Rapture of panic taking the shape, which amongst tombs in churches I have seen, of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds - of woman's Ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave, with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped adoring hands - waiting, watching, trembling, praying, for the trumpet's call to rise from dust forever; - Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses! vision that didst start back - that didst reel away - like a shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind! Epilepsy so brief of horror - wherefore is it that thou canst not die? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of dreams? Fragment of music too passionate, heard once and heard once and heard no more, what aileth thee that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years have lost no element of horror?

\* "Averted signs" - I read the course and changes of the lady's agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures; but let it be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile imperfectly.



1.

Lo! it is summer, almighty summer. The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savanna, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and myself are floating: she upon a fairy pinnacle; and (and) I upon a vast English three-decker. But both of us are wooing gales of pleasure within the domain of our common country - within that watery park of ocean, (within that wild billowy chase) where England takes her pleasure through winter and summer, and which stretches from the rising to the setting sun. Ah! what a wilderness of floral beauty is hidden, or is timidly revealed, upon the shy islands amongst which the pinnacle moves. (is moving). And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers - young women the loveliest, young men the noblest, that are dancing together, and slowly drifting towards us amidst music and incense, bells and blossoms (blossoms and bells), the caroling and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnacle neared us, and gaily she hailed us, and slowly she disappeared under the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, suddenly the music and the carols and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter - all are (were) hushed. What evil had smitten the pinnacle? Meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our mighty shadow? I looked over the taffarel for an answer; and behold! the pinnacle was dismantled, the revel and the revellers had departed. (vanished), the glory of the vintage was dust and

1.

Lo, it is summer, almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating: she upon a fairy pinnacle, and I upon an English three-decker. But both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country - within that ancient watery park-within that pathless chase where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, and which stretches from the rising to the setting sun. Ah! what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnacle moved. And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers - young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards us amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural caroling and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnacle nears us, gaily she hails us, and slowly she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter - all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnacle, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer; and, behold! the pinnacle was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and

1.

Lo, it is summer, almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating: she upon a fairy pinnacle, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country - within that ancient watery park - within that pathless chase where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer from the rising to the setting sun. Ah! what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnacle moved. And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers - young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards us amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural caroling and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnacle nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter - all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnacle, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer; and, behold! the pinnacle was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and

the forest was left without a witness to its beauty upon the seas. "But where," and I turned to our own crew, "where are the lovely lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and blossoms and clustering corymbi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with them?" Answer there was none: And at that I asked (sought) in vain the answer. (vainly I sought for any answer). But suddenly the man at the masthead, whose countenance darkened as he spoke with alarm, cried aloud - "Sail (ship) on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us; with all sails set! She will founder in seventy seconds."

2.

I looked and behold the summer had gone. The sea was convulsed with motion. Mighty mists sate upon its surface, which formed themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the velocity of (fiery pace of) an arrow ran a light frigate right upon us. "Is she mad?" I heard the helmsman say, "In seventy seconds she will founder." Are they blind? (In seventy seconds they will founder.) But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of current or vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course; and as she ran past us without a shock (and for a moment alongside of us, without a shock,) and as she ran, high aloft amongst the shrouds, stood the lady whom I had seen in the carriage. The deep opened from afar in malice to receive her. The swift? crests of angry foam pursued her, the billows (with their fiery crests) ran fierce to catch her. Far away she was borne into the desert spaces of the sea: but still I followed her with my eye (by sight) as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and fiery crests of maddening billows: still I saw her, as she ran, amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies

the forest was left without a witness to its beauty upon the seas. "But where," and I turned to our own crew - "where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with them?" Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the masthead, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried aloud - "Sail on the weather-beam! Down she comes upon us; in seventy seconds she will founder!"

2.

I looked to the weather-side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sate mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. "Are they mad?" some voice exclaimed from our deck. "Are they blind? Do they woo their ruin?" But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or sudden vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds, and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies

the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. "But where," and I turned to our crew - "where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with them?" Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the masthead, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out - "Sail on the weather-beam! Down she comes upon us; in seventy seconds she also will founder."

2.

I looked to the weather-side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sate mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. "Are they mad?" some voice exclaimed from our deck. "Do they woo their ruin?" But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnacle. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds, and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies



streaming before the wind and the spray. There (for leagues I saw her) she stood with hair dishevelled, hands clutched amongst the tackling, - rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying: - amidst the spray and the flying crest of the pursuing waves. Until at last, with a sound (upon a signal) from distant waters, as of malicious loud laughter, all was hidden in driving showers, and immediately afterwards, but when I know not, and how I know not,

3

Sweet funeral bells from some deep recesses of the earth, their wailing awakened me as I lay asleep in a boat that was moored to some unknown (a familiar) shore. The grey (earliest) dawn even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it made on the solitary shore strand, I saw a girl, with her head adorned as for some great festival, running along with extremity of haste. In panic she fled, and often she looked back to some dreadful danger (peril) (object) in the rear. But as she passed my station I leaped ashore to warn her of a danger that perhaps, was gloomier in front. Alas! from me she fled as from (a second) peril; and vainly I shouted to her (would have warned her) of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; and round a rock she wheeled out of sight, and (ten seconds more) I myself wheeled round it only intine to see the cruel quicksand closing above her fair young head. The white roses in her hair [this phrase crossed out; he begins it again] Already her person was buried; alive, only the head and the white diadem of (white) roses around it were yet visible, and her marble arm. [The next words are almost illegible because of revisions. De Quincey apparently wrote "one white arm clutching at some visionary hand stretched out amongst the clouds," re-

streaming before the wind. There she stood with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling - rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying - there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, and how I know not,

3

Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand with extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril; and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rock she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens; and last of all, was visible one marble arm. I saw by the early

streaming before the wind. There she stood with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling - rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying - there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how,

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Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped shore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril; and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens; and last of all, was visible one white marble arm. I saw by the early

I saw by the early twilight this fair young head as it was sinking down to darkness, saw this marble arm as it rose above her head, and her treacherous grave, - tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds; saw this marble arm uttering her last hope and her last despair. The head, the diadem, the arm, - these also sunk; over these also the cruel quicksand closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own tears, and the sighing of the soft [?] breezes along the solitary shore.

I sate, and wept in secret over the memory of her that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. And as I sate, suddenly I heard (caught from afar) (the shout of nations) and a roar as of some great king's artillery advancing rapidly along the distant mountains, and (but) heard chiefly by the echoes among the mountains. "Hush!" I said, as I stood in the attitude of listening, "hush! - this either is the very anarchy of strife amongst men, or else" - and then I listened more profoundly - "or else it is Victory which swallows up all strife," and I raised my head in thanksgiving.

4

Immediately in trance I was carried over land and sea to some distant land, and placed upon a triumphal car amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight brooded over the country [next three words illegible] but dimly heard but did not see. Egyptian darkness hid from us the mighty crowds

twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness - saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head, and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds - saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope and her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm, - these all had sunk; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child and over her blighted dawn.

I sate, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But the tears and funeral bells were hushed suddenly by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by its echoes among the mountains. "Hush!" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen - "hush! - this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else" - and then I listened more profoundly, and said as I raised my head - "or else, of heavens! it is victory that swallows up all strife."

4

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds

twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness - saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head, and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds - saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm, - these all had sunk; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child and over her blighted dawn.

I sate, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of the earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush!" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen - "hush! - this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else" - and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head - "or else, of heavens! it is victory that is final, victory that swallows up all strife."

4

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds



that were weaving restlessly about our carriage as a centre. We heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived within an hour too full of a grandeur commensurate with centuries; too full of almighty joy, to utter themselves by other language than tears, by restless murmurs of thanksgiving, by anthems, by Te Deums, by the echoes from every church, restless reverberations, of the Gloria in Excelsis from every choir (in every church). These tidings it was our great office to carry, the privileges of us on the triumphal car to publish amongst all nations. And already by their impatient angry trappings, our immortal (demonia) horses that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with our delay. But we waited; wherefore did we delay? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations as now indeed accomplished. At midnight the secret word arrived; which word was - Waterloo and Recovered Christendom! The word shone by internal light: before us it rose; and high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over every road which we traversed. Every city at the summons (sight) of the secret word, threw open its gates to receive us. The rivers, under the golden light, were silent as we passed. The (every) forest as we ran along their (its) margins, bowed in homage. The darkness comprehended it.

Two hours (one hour) before (after) midnight we reached a vast cathedral. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the cathedral. Headlong was our pace;

that were weaving restlessly about our carriage as a centre - we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy that acknowledged no fountain but God, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, by reverberations rising from every choir, of the Gloria in excelsis. These tidings we that sate upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and trappings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with delay. wherefore was it that we delayed? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived; which word was - Waterloo and Recovered Christendom! The dreadful word shone by its own light; before us it went; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates to receive us. The rivers were silent as we crossed. All the infinite forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the infinite forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we reached a mighty minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace;

that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre. We heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries; too full of pathos they were, too full of Joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and Te Deums reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sate upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and trappings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with delay. wherefore was it that we delayed? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived; which word was - Waterloo and Recovered Christendom! The dreadful word shone by its own light; before us it went; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margin shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace;

and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and the left of our course, the dying lamps kindled in sympathy with the dreadful word that was flying past. Leagues past counting we had traversed in the cathedral, and as yet no morning light reached us, when we saw before us the galleries and fretwork of the organ and the choir. Every pinnacle of fretwork and carved tracery of flying buttress was occupied by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, to the generations that lay beneath them in the graves, to the generations that were yet to come, saying -

"Chaunt the deliverer's praise in every tongue,"

and receiving answers from afar

"Such as once in heaven and earth were sung."

Of their chaunting was no end; of our headlong gallop was no remission.

and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when we saw before us the aerial galleries of the organ and the choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept, but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying -

"Chaunt the deliver's praise in every tongue,"

and receiving answers from afar,

"such as once in heaven and earth were sung."

And of their chaunting was no end; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor remission.

and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept, but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying -

"Chaunt the deliverer's praise in every tongue,"

and receiving answers from afar,

"such as once in heaven and earth were sung."

And of their chaunting was no end; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.



Thus as we ran like torrents;  
thus as with bridal rapture our  
flying equipage swept over the campo  
santo of the graves; thus as our  
burning wheels carried warrior in-  
stincts, kindled earthly passions  
amongst the trembling dust below us,  
suddenly we became aware of a vast  
necropolis to which from afar we were  
hurrying. In a moment our maddening  
wheels were nearing it.

Of purple granite in massive piles  
was this city of the dead, and yet for  
one moment it lay like a visionary  
purple stain on the horizon, so  
mighty was the distance. In the  
second moment this purple city trembled  
through many changes, and grew as by  
fiery pulsations, so mighty was the  
pace. In the third moment

Thus as we ran like torrents, -  
thus as our flying equipage with bridal  
rapture swept over the Campo Santo of  
the cathedral graves, - suddenly we  
became aware of a vast necropolis  
rising like (a) cloud(s) out of the sea  
from the far-off horizon - a necropolis  
for the warrior dead that rested from  
their feuds. Of purple granite was  
the necropolis; yet it lay like a purple  
stain upon the sky; so mighty was the  
distance. In the second minute it  
trembled as through many changes, and  
grew into wondrous altitude, so mighty  
was the pace. In the third minute

Campo Santo (but to come in at the end,  
not as a footnote) [It was, however,  
printed as a footnote.] I presume that  
most readers will be acquainted with  
the history of the Camp Santo at Pisa -  
composed of earth brought from the Holy  
Land as the highest prize which noble  
piety of crusading society [?] could ask  
or imagine. There is a Campo Santo  
also at Naples, formed however I believe  
on the fine example of Pisa. Possibly  
the idea may have been more extensively  
copied. - to readers who are unacquainted  
with the Cathedral cities of England,  
it may be right to mention that the  
graves within side the cathedrals form a  
flat pavement over which carriages and  
horses might roll; and perhaps a boyish  
remembrance of one particular cathedral  
across which I had seen beasts walked and  
burthens carried may have favored me in  
this respect.

Thus, as we ran like torrents -  
thus, as we swept with bridal rapture  
over the Campo Santo\* of the cathedral  
graves - suddenly we became aware of a  
vast necropolis rising upon the far-off  
a city of sepulchres, built within the  
saintly cathedral for the warrior dead  
that rested from their feuds on earth.  
Of purple granite was the necropolis;  
yet, in the first minute, it lay like a  
purple stain upon the horizon - so  
mighty was the distance. In the second  
minute it trembled through many changes,  
growing into terraces and towers of  
wondrous altitude, so mighty was the  
pace. In the third minute

\*Campo Santo. it is probable that most  
of my readers will be acquainted with  
this history of the Campo Santo at Pisa -  
composed of earth brought from Jerusalem  
for a bed of sanctity, as the highest  
prize which the noble piety of cru-  
saders could ask or imagine. There is  
another Campo Santo at Naples, formed,  
however (I presume) on the example given  
at Pisa. Possibly the idea may have  
been more extensively copied. To  
readers who are unacquainted with Eng-  
land, or who (being English) are yet  
unacquainted with the cathedral cities  
of England, it may be right to mention  
that the graves within-side the  
cathedrals often form a flat pavement  
over which carriages and horses might  
roll; and perhaps a boyish remembrance  
of one particular cathedral, across  
which I had seen passengers walk and  
burdens carried, may have assisted my  
dream.

Thus, as we ran like torrents -  
thus, as we swept with bridal rapture  
over the Campo Santo\* of the cathedral  
graves - suddenly we became aware of a  
vast necropolis rising upon the far-off  
a city of sepulchres, built within the  
saintly cathedral for the warrior dead  
that rested from their feuds on earth.  
Of purple granite was the necropolis;  
yet, in the first minute, it lay like a  
purple stain upon the horizon - so  
mighty was the distance. In the second  
minute it trembled through many changes,  
growing into terraces and towers of  
wondrous altitude, so mighty was the  
pace. In the third minute

\*Campo Santo": It is probable that most  
of my readers will be acquainted with  
the history of the Campo Santo (or  
demetery) at Pisa, composed of earth  
brought from Jerusalem from a bed of  
sanctity, as the highest prize which the  
noble piety of crusaders could ask or  
imagine. To readers who are unacquainted  
with England, or who (being English)  
are yet unacquainted with the cathedral  
cities of England, it may be right to  
mention that the graves within-side the  
cathedrals often form a flat pavement  
over which carriages and horses might  
run; and perhaps a boyish remembrance  
of one particular cathedral, across  
which I had seen passengers walk and  
burdens carried, as about two centuries  
back they were through the middle of  
St. Paul's in London, may have assisted  
my dream.



already with our dreadful gallop we were entering its suburbs. Systems of sarcophagi rose with crests aerial of terraces and turrets into the upper glooms, strode forward with haughty encroachment upon the central aisle, ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. When the sarcophagi wheeled, then did our horses wheel. Like rivers in horned floods wheeling in pomp of unfathomable waters round headlands; like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests, faster than ever light travels through the wilderness of darkness, we shot the angles, we fled round the curve of the labyrinthine city. With the storm of our horses' feet, and of our burning wheels, did we carry earthly passions, kindle warrior instincts amongst the silent dust around us, dust of our noble fathers that had slept in God since Creci. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs, bas-reliefs of battles, bas-reliefs of battle-fields, battles from forgotten ages, battles from yesterday; battle-fields that long since Nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers; battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage.

And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, already we were abreast of the last bas-relief; already we were recovering the arrow-like flight of the central aisle, when coming up it in counterview to ourselves we beheld the frailest of cars, built as might seem from floral wreaths, and from the shells of Indian seas. Half concealed were the fawns that drew it by the floating mists that went before it in pomp. But the mists hid not the lovely countenance of the infant girl that sate wistful upon the car, and hid not the birds of tropic plumage with which she played.

already with our awful gallop we were entering the suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, built with towers and turrets that strode forward with haughty intrusion upon the limits of the central aisle, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Where the terraces ran, there did our horses run. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs; bas-reliefs of battles, bas-reliefs of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages, battles from yesterday; battle-fields that long since nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers; battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there our horses ["our horses" crossed out; line continues] did we run; where the towers curved, there did we curve. Thus as swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood wheeling round obstructing headlands. Like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests, faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions - kindled warrior instincts in the dust that lay around us; dust of our noble fathers that had slept in God since Creci. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, already we were coming abreast of the last bas-relief, already we had recovered the arrow-like flight of the central (great) (endless) aisle; when coming up it, we beheld a female infant sitting in a carriage as frail as flowers. The silvery mists, which rose before us, hid the fawns which (that) drew her; but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played, but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her

already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs - bas-reliefs of battles - bas-reliefs of battle-fields; of battles from forgotten ages; of battles from yesterday - of battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers - of battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did we run; where the towers curved, there did we curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands; like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests; faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions - kindled warrior instincts - amongst the dust that lay around us; dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Creci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now we were abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us, we beheld a female infant that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played, but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked upon her

already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs - bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages, battles from yesterday; battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers; battlefields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did we run; where the towers curved, there did we curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands; like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests; faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions - kindled warrior instincts - amongst the dust that lay around us; dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Creci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now we were abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us, we beheld a female infant that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played, but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked upon her



Face to face she rode forward to meet us, and baby laughter in her eyes saluted the ruin that approached. "Oh, baby," I said in anguish, "must we that carry tidings of great joy to every people by God's messengers of ruin to thee?" In horror I rose at the thought. But then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured in the bas-relief - a dying trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of Waterloo he rose to his feet, and unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it in his dying anguish to his stony lips, sounding once, and yet once again, proclamation that to thy ears, oh baby, must have spoken from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and the shuddering silence. The choir had ceased to sing; the uproar of our laurelled equipage alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked into life - we men, and our horses with their fiery forelegs rising in mid-air to their everlasting gallop - were petrified to a bas-relief. Oh, glacial pageantry of death, that from end to end of the gorgeous cathedral for a moment froze every eye by contagion of panic. Then for a third time the trumpet sounded. Back with the shattering burst came the infinite rushing of life. The seals of frost were raised from our stifling hearts.

from its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us, as if danger there were none. "Ah, Baby," I exclaimed, "shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo?" Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee?" In horror I rose at the thought, But then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on the bas-relief - a dying trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of battle he rose to his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it in his dying anguish to his stony lips - sounding once, and yet once again: proclamation, that in thy ears, oh baby! must have spoken from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us and the mighty (mightiest) silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The

[Here the MS ends]

from the topmost shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. "Oh, baby!" I exclaimed, "shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee?" In horror I rose at the thought; but then also in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on the bas-relief - a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field he rose to his feet; and unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips - sounding once, and yet once again; proclamation that, in thy ears, oh, baby! must have spoken from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the rattling of our harness, alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked into life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in mid-air to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded; the seals were taken off all pulses; life, and the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling storms and darkness; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us - "Whither has the infant fled? - Is the young child caught up to God?" Lo! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory.

from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. "Oh, baby!" I exclaimed, "shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee?" In horror I rose at the thought; but then also in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on the bas-relief - a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field he rose to his fee; and unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips - sounding once, and yet once again; proclamation that, in thy ears, oh, baby! spoke from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the dreadful rattle of our harness, the groaning of our wheels alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked into life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in mid-air to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded; the seals were taken off all pulses; life, and the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling storms and darkness; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us - "Whither has the infant fled? - Is the young child caught up to God?" Lo! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory.

Whence came that? Was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed through the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs that were painted on the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth? Whence-soever it were - there, within that crimson radiance, suddenly appeared a female head, and then a female figure. It was the child - now grown up to woman's height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, there she stood - sinking rising, trembling, fainting - raving, despairing; and behind the volume of incense that, night and day, streamed upwards from the altar, was seen the fiery font, and dimly was descried the outline of the dreadful being that should baptise her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings; that wept and pleaded for her; that prayed when she could not; that fought with heaven by tears for her deliverance; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that he had won at last.

## 5

Then rose the agitation, spreading through the infinite cathedral, to its agony; then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but sobbed and muttered at intervals - gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense - threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter! with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing, didst enter the tumult: trumpet and echo - farewell love and farewell anguish sprang through the dreadful sanctus. We, that spread flight before us, heard the tumult, as of flight, mustering behind us. In fear we looked round for the unknown steps that, in flight or pursuit, were gathering upon our own. Who were these that followed? The faces, which no man

A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed through the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted on the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth? There, suddenly, within that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman's head, and then of a woman's figure. The child it was - grown up to woman's height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, voiceless she stood - sinking, rising, raving, despairing; and behind the volume of incense that, night and day, streamed upwards from the altar, dimly was seen the fiery font, and the shadow of that dreadful being who should have baptized her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings; that wept and pleaded for her; that prayed when she could not; that fought with Heaven by tears for her deliverance; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that from Heaven he had won at last.

## 5

Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet but muttered at intervals - gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense - threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter, with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing, didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo - farewell love, and farewell anguish - rang through the dreadful sanctus. [De Quincey omits the next four sentences.]



could count - whence were they? "Oh, darkness of the grave!" I exclaimed, "that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font wert visited with secret light - that wert searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye - were these indeed thy children? Poms of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again to the voice of perfect joy, could it be ye that had wrapped me in the reflux of panic?" What ailed me, that I should fear when the triumphs of earth were advanceing? Ah! Pariah heart within me, that couldst never hear the sound of joy without sullen whispers of treachery in ambush; that, from six years old, didst never hear the promise of perfect love, without seeing aloft amongst the stars fingers as of a man's hand writing the secret legend - "ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" - wherefore shouldst thou not fear, though all men should rejoice? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, and saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man - ah! rushing, as of wings that chased! But I heard a voice from heaven, which said - "Let there be no reflux of panic - let there be no more fear, and sudden death! Cover them with joy as the tides cover the shore!" That heard the children of the choir, that heard the children of the grave. All the hosts of jubilation made ready to move. Like armies that ride in pursuit, they moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral through its eastern gates, they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders that overpowered our own.

Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font wert visited and searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye - were these indeed thy children? Poms of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again to the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with the festivals of Death? [De Quincey omits the next three sentences.] Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together than sang to the generations of man. [exclamatory phrases and two sentences are omitted.] All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral, they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own.

As brothers we moved together; to the skies we rose - to the dawn that advanced - to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest - that, having hid his face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending - was ascending from Waterloo - in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom having overshadowed with his ineffable passion of Death - suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside his arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify his goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, has he shown thee to me, standing before the golden dawn, and ready to enter its gates - with the dreadful Word going before thee - with the armies of the grave behind thee; shown thee to me, sinking, rising, fluttering, fainting, but then suddenly reconciled, adoring; a thousand times has he followed thee in the worlds of sleep - through storms; through desert seas; through the darkness of quicksands; through fugues and the persecution of fugues; through dreams, and the dreadful resurrections that are in dreams - only that at the last, with one motion of his victorious arm, he might record and emblazon the endless resurrections of his love!

As brothers we moved together; to the dawn that advanced, to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest - that, having hid his face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending, from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending, in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom having overshadowed with His ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent, suffered thy angel to turn aside His arm, and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify His goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn, with the secret word riding before thee, with the armies of the grave behind thee, - seen thee sinking, rising, raving, despairing; a thousand times in the worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by God's angel through storms, through desert seas, through the darkness of quicksands, through dreams and the dreadful revelations that are in dreams; only that at the last, with one sling of His victorious arm, he might snatch thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in thy deliverance the endless resurrections of His love!



In all, De Quincey made over 250 revisions<sup>1</sup> in the Dream Fugue; over 110 were made in the nouns and adjectives, less than fifty in the verbs, and the rest in miscellaneous changes (shifting sentences, etc.). But the number is not so significant as the kinds of changes made, for the revisions in the nouns and adjectives increase the emotional effect, whereas the changes in the verbs rarely deepen their emotional intensity.

Some of the changes in the verbs are in tense: "is hidden" to "was hidden," "hailed" to "hails," "sunk" to "has sunk," "disappeared" to "disappears." Some revisions change the meaning but not the emotive qualities: "reached" to "approached," "formed" to "grouped," "rose" to "went." Some changes, however, do alter the expression of emotion: "said" to "whispered," "Bowed" to "shivered," "travels" to "unwove."<sup>2</sup> A few might be said actually to decrease the emotive intensity: "sobbed and muttered" to "muttered," "convulsed" to "was rocking and shaken."

The majority of the revisions made in the nouns and adjectives heighten their emotive quality; some of the most notable changes are as follows: "stern" to "passionate," "pleasure" to "festal happiness," "motion" to "gathering wrath," "Velocity of an arrow" to "fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow," "flying crest" to "fiery crest,"

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1. Here arises the difficulty in counting; I have tried to count only those changes that were definite.
  2. This arises from the change within the figure of speech: "light travels through the wilderness of darkness" to "light ever unwove the mazes of darkness." Even including sentences that were added (as "what aileth thee?"), I have found less than two dozen changes made in the emotive quality of finite verbs.

"perennial blights" to "sad blights" and then to "sad funeral blights," "malicious loud laughter" to "malicious laughter and mockery," "in churches" to "in churches' monuments" and then to "amongst tombs in churches," "Dreadful peril" to "dreadful object," to "dreadful danger" and finally to "dreadful enemy," "vast cathedral" to "mighty minister." He changes "shuddering humanity" to "shuddering humanity on the brink of abysses" and finally to "shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses," "light" to "golden light," "dying lamps" to "lamps, dying or sickening," "central aisle" to "great aisle" to "endless central aisle" and finally to "illimitable central aisle," "mighty silence" to "mightiest silence" and then to "aboriginal silence."

It is partly by this technique that De Quincey achieves his dream-like effect. By placing his emotional emphasis on the substantive elements and by under-emphasizing the verbs, he helps to fill the reader's mind with a series of disconnected pictures - impressions having a curiously static quality and giving the feeling of arrested motion characteristic of dreams.

Yet, the Dream Fugue is perhaps, after all, a tour de force not only in its attempt to achieve an unusually high degree of fantasy but also in that, as the name indicates, it is conceived as a musical structure<sup>1</sup> - a form that places restrictions on the

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1. Calvin Brown. The Musical Structure of De Quincey's Dream Fugue, Musical Quarterly, V. XXIV. (July, 1938). Pp. 341-350. Brown advances the premise that De Quincey used the series of participles as the counter-subject of the fugue.

writer who uses it; De Quincey apparently not only was conscious of the necessity of keeping within the larger limits of the fugue in his general development of the work, but also seemed to have been influenced by it in his words and phrases.

But other writings of De Quincey which are not subject to the same rigid conditions show a similar handling of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Although The Vision of Sudden Death is not a fantasy but an actual emotional experience, De Quincey presents it as a series of dream-like impressions; he gives to an account of an actual happening "the clarity and palsied immobility of a night-mare."<sup>1</sup> This is, once more, at least partly attributable to the same reason: the predominance of the emotive nouns and adjectives.

Revisions in the manuscript and changes made for the Author's Edition are of the same kind as those in the Dream Fugue. I have included here a portion of The Vision of Sudden Death: (1) the manuscript<sup>2</sup> submitted to Blackwood's Magazine, (2) the version as it was printed in Blackwood's Magazine, (December, 1849, Pp. 747-750), and (3) the version as in the Author's Edition, Vol. II, Pp. 336-343. The method of presentation is the same as that used for the Dream Fugue.

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1. De Quincey's Sanctuary, TLS (July 25, 1936) P. 605.

2. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS

Suddenly from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a far-off sound, as of some motion on the distant road. The murmurs stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in fear; but then it died away. Once awakened however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is that I am unusually deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and hesitation hangs like a guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for action. But on the other hand this accursed gift I have as regards thought, that in the first step of any calamity I see its total evolution: in the radix, already I read too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion - in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence I read already the last. On the present occasion, it was not that I feared for ourselves. What could injure us? Our bulk and impetus charmed us from peril in any collision. And I had hurried through so many perils, that were frightful to approach, that were matters of laughter as we looked back upon them, for any anxiety to rest upon our interests. On the box of the mail ~~[line crossed out]~~ The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray us who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frailer and lighter in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. The other party, if other party there was, seeing our lamps which were still lighted, would trust to us for quartering\*. But I hoped they also might be

\*"quartering"-this is the technical word; and, I presume, derived from the French cartayer, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

Suddenly from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. One roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for action. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have as regards thought, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution: in the radix, I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. What could injure us? Our bulk and impetus charmed us against peril in any collision. And I had rode through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were a matter of laughter as we looked back upon them, for any anxiety to rest upon our interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray me who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side;

Suddenly from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. One roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for action. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have as regards thought, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution: in the radix of the series, I see too certainly and too instantly the entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. Us, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were a matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror - the parting face a jest, for any anxiety to rest upon our interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray me who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it might be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side;



and two wrongs might make a right. That was not likely. The same motive which had drawn our horses to the right side, viz., the soft beaten sand as contrasted with the paved centre, would have drawn others. All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw - not discursively - but by one flash of intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which might be gathering ahead, ah, what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of sorrow, seemed to steal upon the air - as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was, a whisper from perhaps 4 miles off, that secretly announces a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable. What could be done, who was it that could attempt anything, to stop the storm-flight of these maniacal horses. But could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in your power to do so.

and two wrongs might make a right. That was not likely. The same motive which had drawn us to the right hand side of the road, viz., the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre, would prove attractive to others. Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us would rely on us for quartering.\* All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw - not discursively or by effort - but as by one flash of horrid intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which might be gathering ahead, as, reader, what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, seemed to steal upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was - a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off - secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable. What could be done - who was it that could do it - to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? What! could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in your power to do so.

\* "quartering"-this is the technical word; and, I presume, derived from the French cartayer, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

and two wrongs might make a right. That was not likely. The same motive which had drawn us to the right hand side of the road, viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre, would prove attractive to others. [sentence inserted after "attractive to others"] The two adverse carriages would, therefore, to a certainty, be traveling on the same side; and from this, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked to from us. [A footnote on this sentence was also added, explaining that, although the mail was a Royal carriage and all others should give way to it, this regulation was "imperfectly known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing [to] the movements of both sides."] Our lamps still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us would rely on us for quartering.\* All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which might be gathering ahead, ah! what a sigh of woe, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was - a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off - secretly announcing a ruin, that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed. What could be done - who was it that could do it - check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in your power to do so.

\* "quartering" - this is the technical word; and, I presume, derived from the French cartayer, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But from the way in which the coachman's hand was locked between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. The guard subsequently found it impossible, after the danger had passed. Not the grasp only, but also the position of Cyclops made it (the attempt) impossible. You see that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in the horse's mouth for two centuries. Take crossed out Unbridle him for a minute if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Or stay, reader, unhorse me that marble emperor: knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now clearly the sounds of wheels. Who could and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gaiety in a gig? Whoever it was, something must be attempted to warn them. For the other party rest the action: but upon us, and, woe is me! that us was myself, rests the responsibility of warning. Yet how should this be accomplished? Might I not seize the guard's horn? -Already on the first thought I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat.

And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. The guard subsequently found it impossible, after the danger had passed. Not the grasp only, but also the position of this Polyphemus, made the attempt impossible. You still think otherwise. See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Or stay, reader, unhorse me that marble emperor: knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? -was it youthful gaiety in a gig? Whoever it was, something must be attempted to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon us - and woe is me! that us was my single self - rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished? Might I not seize the guard's horn? Already on the first thought I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat.

And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible.

Three sentences then omitted: The guard subsequently found it impossible after the danger had passed. Not the grasp only, but also the position of this Polyphemus made the attempt impossible. You still think otherwise.

Easy, was it? See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gaiety in a gig? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon us - and woe is me! that us was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self - rests the responsibility of warning. Yet how should this be accomplished. Might I not sound the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat.



But this, from the foreign mails being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly 300 miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I lost much attempt our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us the stage where the collision would be accomplished, the parties that seemed summoned to the trial, and the impossibility of acting by an communication with the guard.

Before us lay an avenue strait as an arrow, 600 yards perhaps in length. And the umbrageous trees, that rose in a regular line from either side, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees made the early light / The next word is almost obliterated; it may be "move," : but there was still light enough to perceive at the further end of this gothic aisle, a light reedy gig, in which was seated a young man and a young lady. Ah young Sir! what are you about? If it is necessary that you should whisper your communications to this young lady, though really I see nobody likely at this hour and on this solitary road to overhear your conversation, - is it therefore necessary that you should carry your lips forward to hers? - The little carriage is coming on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it, being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity there is but a minute and a half. What is it that I shall do? - Strange it is, that and might to a mere auditor seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the Iliad to prompt the sole recourse that remained. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles and its effect.

But this, from the foreign mails being piled upon the roof, was a difficult, and even dangerous attempt, to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us the stage where the collision must be accomplished, the parties that seemed summoned to the trial, and the impossibility of saving them by any communication with the guard.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred years, perhaps in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this gothic aisle, a light reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and, by his side, a young lady. Ah, young sir, what are you about? If it is necessary that you should whisper your communications to this young lady - though really I see nobody at this hour, and on this solitary road likely to overhear your conversation - is it, therefore, necessary that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it, being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. What is it that I shall do? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale, might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the Iliad to prompt the sole recourse that remained. But so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles and its effect.

But this, from the accident which I have mentioned, of the foreign mail's being piled upon the roof was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside traveling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was apparently finished. The court was sitting; the case was heard; the judge had finished; and only the verdict was yet in arrears.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred years, perhaps in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this gothic aisle, a frail reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side, a young lady. Ah, young sir, what are you about? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communications to this young lady - though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you - is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it, being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to allhuman calculation, there is but a minute and a half. Oh heavens! what is it that I shall do? Speaking or acting, what help can I offer? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale, might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the Iliad to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles and its effect.

nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered position. Yet perhaps there is still time; Twenty (seconds) or fifteen of the seventy seconds may still remain; and one almighty leap might still clear the ground. But then hurry, (hurry, hurry) for the flying moments - they hurry; oh hurry, hurry, my brave young man, for the cruel hoofs of our horses - they also are hurrying. But faithful was he, that drove, to his terrific duty: faithful was the horse to his command. One impulse given with voice and hand by the stranger, one rush from the (docile) horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a leap, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The better (forward) half of the little equipage had then evidently cleared our over-hanging shadow: that was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should have floated off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished (should perish) were embarked the human freightage. The rear section of the carriage was all that concerned the horror of the case, and was that as yet (altogether) beyond the line of ruin? What power could answer that question? What glance of eye, (what) thought of man, (what) wing of angel, had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer and divide (find the division between) the one from the other? Light does not travel after light in the same sunbeam more indivisibly, than apparently did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. That knew the young man too certainly.

nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet, even now it may not be too late: fifteen of the twenty seconds may still be unexhausted; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments - they hurry! Oh hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses - they also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. Fear not for him, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove, to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to his command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow: that was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished, were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage - was that certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. That must the young man have felt too plainly.

nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet, even now it may not be too late: fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted. [The "twenty seconds" in the Blackwood's text is undoubtedly a typographical error] and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments - they hurry! Oh hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses - they also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for him, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove, to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to his command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-towering shadow: that was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished, were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage - was that certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly, than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. That must the young man have felt too plainly.



But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas Athene? No, certainly: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant: a shout would suffice, such as should carry terror into two thoughtless young people, and one gig horse. I shouted: and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted: and now he heard me: for now he raised his head.

Now then I had done all that could be done: more on my part was not possible. Mine was (I said) the first step. The second was (I said it to myself), (is) for the young man: the third (I said silently) was for God. If the young stranger is a brave man, and if indeed he loves the young girl at (by) his side, - or loving her not, if he feels the obligation, which every man worthy to be called a man, acknowledges, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection, he will at least make an effort to save her. If that fails, he will not perish the more for having made it; and he will die, as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But, if he makes no effort, if he shrinks from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for having shrunk, by baseness, from his duty. And why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No: let him perish and in that [two words obliterated, perhaps "case - all"] wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the poor helpless girl, that, in that case, by the fiercest of translations, and within seventy or ninety seconds stand before the judgement-seat of God.

But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No, certainly: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; a shout would suffice such as should carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and on gig horse. I shouted - and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted - and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me could be done: more on my part was not possible. Mine had been the first step: the second was for the young man: the third was for God. If, said I, the stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side, or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection - he will at least make some effort to save her. If that fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die, as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; let him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl, who, now, upon the least shadow of failure in him, must, by the fiercest of translations - must, without time for a prayer - must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant: such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig horse. I shouted - and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted - and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then all had been done that, by me could be done: more on my part was not possible. Mine had been the first step: the second was for the young man: the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side, or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection - he will at least make some effort to save her. If that fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die, as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; let him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl, who, now, upon the least shadow of failure in him, must, by the fiercest of translations - must, without time for a prayer - must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.



But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him; and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that coming down: already its shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to fight it. Ah what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day: ah what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful and unfore-(sudden) crisis of life carries a man as if running on the seas before some mighty hurricane, up to the giddy edge of some mountainous wave, from which he descries two courses, and a voice says to him audibly - "This way lies hope, [that way] crossed out" Take the other way and mourn forever! "-yet even then, amidst the raving of the seas and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation, is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek all his counsel from him! For five (seven seconds) it might be of his seventy (seconds) the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds he sate like one that mused upon some great purpose. For five seconds he sate [the insertion "with eyes upraised to heaven" has the last two words crossed out] like one that prayed in sorrow under some perplexing agony of doubt for wisdom from above to guide him in making the better choice. Then he rose to his feet; and by a sudden strain upon the reins, raising his horse's forefeet, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind legs, so as to place the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved; except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. Yet, if no more were done

But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day: ah! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful crisis on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some mountainous wave, from which, accordingly as he chooses his course, he descries two courses, and a voice says to him audibly - "This way lies hope; take the other way and mourn for ever!" Yet, even then, amidst the raving of the seas and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation - is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek all his counsel from him! For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more he sate immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five he sate with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for wisdom to guide him towards the better choice. Then suddenly he rose; stood upright; and by a sudden strain upon the reins, raising his horse's feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind legs so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right-angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved: except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done,

But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day: ah! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, "One way lies hope; take the other, and mourn for ever!" How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation - is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from him!

[new paragraph]

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose; stood upright; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's forefeet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hindlegs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved: except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done,

His back was turned to us; But his ear had been already instructed by the dreadful rattle of our harness he could no longer see - that all was finished as regarded any further effort of his. Already in a position (spirit no doubt) of resignation he had rested from his struggle; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering - "Father, which art in Heaven, what I on earth have attempted, do thou ratify (above) and finish (above)."

[new paragraph]

We ran past them like a mill-race\* in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our left near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood a little obliquely and not quite as far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror to look down and look back upon the ruins we might have caused.

["to look down and back" crossed out and included in the next sentence.] From my elevated station I looked down and I looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed - that all was finished as regarded any further effort of his. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle; and perhaps, in his heart he was whispering - "Father, which art above, do thou finish in heaven what I on earth have attempted." We ran past them faster than ever mill-race in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely and not quite so far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to look upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but, by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed that all was finished as regarded any effort of his. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, "Father, which art in heaven, do Thou finish above what I on earth have attempted." Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig; which stood rather obliquely, and not quite so far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near-wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene; which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

\* "a mill-race": - There needs no authority for such an image. But, lest the reader should fancy it not grand enough for the occasion, let me remind him of those lines in the Com. Div. of Dante, (Dante's Inferno, Canto III, v 46-7-8) [The preceding sentence was crossed out; De Quincey rewrote it to read] But, it may be thought to want dignity. As some argument that it does not, let me remind the reader of Dante (Inferno Canto XXIII, v46-7-8)

Non corse mai sì tosto acqua per docea

A volger niota di mulin terragro,

Quand' ella più verso le pale approccia."

[The footnote was not printed in Blackwood's, in De Quincey's own edition, nor in subsequent reprintings of The English Mail Coach.]



The horse was planted immovably with his forefeet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party was alone untouched by passion of sudden death. The little cany carriage, partly perhaps from the dreadful torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the dreadful thundering blow we had given to it, - as if it sympathized with human horror, was all shiver with tremblings. The young man sate like a rock. He stirred not at all. But his was the steadiness of frozen agitation. As yet he dared not to look round. For he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could not be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if his safety was accomplished. But the lady - -

But the lady --! Oh heavens will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, tossed her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing! Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case: suffer me to recal before your mind the circumstances of the unparalleled situation. From the deep peace of this saintly summer night, from the pathetic blending of this of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight - from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love, - suddenly as from the woods and fields, - suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelations, - suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, Death the crowned\* phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered. In the twinkling of an eye our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction: the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

\* It is important to the rhythmus that this word crowned should be read, and therefore should be printed, as a dissyllable - crowned. [It was so printed in Blackwood's and in De Quincey's own edition, but the accent mark was omitted in most later editions.]

The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party was alone untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage - partly perhaps from the dreadful torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it - as if it sympathised with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man sat like a rock. He stirred not at all. But his was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady - -

But the lady --! Oh heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing! Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of the unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night, - from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight, from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love, - suddenly as from the woods and fields, - suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation, - suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered. In the twinkling of an eye our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage - partly, perhaps, from the violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it - as if it sympathised with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But his was the steadiness of agitation frozen into horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady - -

But the lady --! Oh heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing! Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case: suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of the unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night, - from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight, from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love, - suddenly as from the woods and fields, - suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation, - suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered; the strife was finished: the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.



De Quincey made over 180 revisions in this portion of The Vision of Sudden Death; but of these over seventy were made in the nouns and adjectives and less than thirty in the verbs. Approximately eighty were of a miscellaneous kind. As in the Dream Fugue, the revisions heighten the emotive quality of the nouns and adjectives rather than of the verbs.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the changes made in the verbs make little or no difference in their emotive quality: "had hurried" to "had rode" and then to "had ridden," "would have drawn others" to "would prove attractive to others," "was" to "had been," "is" to "was," "should have floated off" to "should float off." It is doubtful if there is any material difference between "tossed her arms wildly to heaven" and "threw up her arms wildly to heaven." A few changes increase the emotive quality: "The young man sat like a rock. He stirred not at all." to "The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock."

Changes in the emotive aspects of nouns and adjectives are more in evidence; some of these are "far-off sound" to "sullen sound," "first step of any calamity" to "first step towards the possibility of a misfortune," "so many perils" to "too many hundreds of perils," "intuition" to "horrid intuition" to "horrid simultaneous intuition." In a similar manner he changes "myself" to "my single self" and finally to "my frail

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1. Although Lane Cooper in The Prose Poetry of Thomas De Quincey Leipzig: 1902, Pp. 56-61 makes sub-divisions as to the kind of emotion expressed, his general conclusions substantiate my own.

opium-shattered self," "soft beaten sand," to "the luxury of the soft beaten sand," "light reedy gig," to "frail reedy gig," "over-hanging shadow," to "over-towering shadow," "with tremblings," to "with tremblings and shiverings," "frozen agitation" to "agitation frozen into rest by horror," "deep peace" to "silence and deep peace."

The ways in which emotive changes are made in the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death are significant. (1) Revisions are made in the word or phrase but no additional words are added; The emotive intensity of the word or phrase is increased by crossing out words or phrases and placing more emotive ones in their place: "far-off" becomes "sullen," "mighty" becomes "mightiest" and then "aboriginal," "peril" becomes "object," "danger," and finally "enemy." (2) Revisions are made by adding words or phrases with or without changing the initial words or phrases: "deep peace" to "silence and deep peace," "perennial blights" to "sad blights" to "sad funeral blights," "myself" to "my single self" and then "my frail opium-shattered self," "tremblings" to "tremblings and shiverings,"<sup>1</sup> "amidst bells and blossoms" to "amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages." The majority of De Quincey's revisions increase the emotive quality of a passage by adding more emotive words and phrases.

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1. Although this revision has resulted in a pleonastic word pair, the use of pleonastic word pairs to achieve emotional intensification is not common enough in De Quincey's works to be considered as a distinctive characteristic.

The piling up of emotive elements is part of the pattern of "associational thinking" which I mentioned at the opening of this section. One emotion or idea brings to De Quincey's mind a similar emotion or lead which he then includes in his text as an addition to the first. This process is apparent in many of the revisions made in the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death. Even short passages show this process. For example, "malicious loud laughter" is changed to "malicious laughter and mockery" because "malicious laughter" must have suggested "mockery" to De Quincey, and he added the word to the phrase. Likewise, "sad blights" suggested "funeral" and the phrase was changed to "sad funeral blights." It is apparent that much of the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death was revised on exactly the same basis. Moreover, the revisions follow pretty much this same pattern no matter when they were made, whether for Blackwood's Magazine in 1849 or for the Author's Edition in 1854. De Quincey revised the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death on the basis of associated ideas and emotions he used a method suited to the subject and one in which he was especially adept.

In works of impassioned prose this is a peculiarly effective technique. Fantasy and dreams, whether opium induced or not, contain associated impressions - impressions suggesting each other and appearing as a loosely connected group of emotion pictures.

## Chapter Two

### Sentences

## I

Sentence Length

Almost every writer who has become interested in De Quincey has spoken of the length and complexity of many of his sentences. Minto tells us that "his sentences are stately, elaborate, crowded with qualifying clauses and parenthetical allusions, to a degree unparrelled among modern writers."<sup>1</sup> Saintsbury, who points out that De Quincey's style in general is marked by a sort of "rignmarole," remarks that it is "impossible for him to pull himself up briefly."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Sackville West refers to his "enormous sentences,"<sup>3</sup> and Salt calls some of them "long, solemn, slow-winding."<sup>4</sup>

In theory at least, De Quincey himself does not approve of sentences that are too long and involved. He speaks of the "vast importance of compression"<sup>5</sup> and remarks that wordiness causes the public to waste time: -

"Simply to retrench one word from each sentence, one superfluous epithet, for example, would probably increase the disposable time of the public by one twelfth part...By cultivating a closer logic and more severe habits of thinking, perhaps two sentences out of three might be pruned away."<sup>6</sup>

He is somewhat concerned over the possible effect of some of the sentences in the revised edition of the Confessions: -

"...a heavy or too intricate arrangement of sentences may have defeated the tendency of what, under its natural presentation, would have been affecting."<sup>7</sup>

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1. Minto. op. cit., P. 50. One might quarrel with "unparalleled." De Quincey is no worse than Coleridge in sentence structure.
  2. George Saintsbury. Collected Essays and Papers, 1875-1920. V. I., P. 217.
  3. Sackville West. op. cit., P. 333.
  4. Henry S. Salt. De Quincey. London: 1904. P. 80.
  5. X, P. 234. (Style)
  6. Ibid, P. 235.
  7. III, P. 220. (Preface to the Enlarged Edition)



He also complains of the length and lack of organization in the sentences written by the Germans, especially Kant: -

"A sentence is viewed by him, and by most of his countrymen, as a rude mould or elastic form admitting of expansion to any possible extent: it is laid down as a rough outline, and then he superstruction and epi-superstruction it is gradually reared to a giddy altitude which no eye can follow. Yielding to his natural impulse of subjoining all additions, or exceptions, or modifications, not in the shape of separate consecutive sentences, but as intercalations and stuffings of one original sentence, Kant might naturally enough have written a book from beginning to end in one vast hyperbolical sentence."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey expresses his disapproval of the German sentence quite often. In Rhetoric he says: -

"Every German regards a sentence in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach but for the waggon, into which his privilege is to crowd as much as he possibly can. Having framed a sentence, therefore, he next proceeds to pack it, which is effected partly by unwieldy tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetical involutions, are stuffed and violently rammed into the bowels of the principal proposition."<sup>2</sup>

As I shall show in this chapter, De Quincey's theory is sometimes not in keeping with his practice. His criticism of long and involved sentences can be applied quite fairly to his own writings.

Statistical evidence is not by itself a very satisfactory means of exemplifying sentence structure. Still, the work that has been done by various scholars indicates that De Quincey uses, on the average, a greater number of words in a sentence than most

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1. X, Pp. 160-161. (Style)
  2. X, P. 122. (Rhetoric) cf. also X, P. 257, X, P. 159, and Gillies German Stories, op. cit. Pp. 856-858. It is also touched upon in Sigmund K. Proctor, Thomas De Quincey's Theory of Literature. Chapter VI, Literature as Manipulation. Pp. 228-268, and Chapter V, Style. Pp. 186-227. esp. Pp. 188-191, 194-199.

of his contemporaries do. He also uses fewer simple sentences.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem, therefore, that the statistical evidence substantiates the general belief concerning the length and complexity of De Quincey's sentences.

De Quincey's use of long and involved sentences is to be attributed to his own individual kind of thinking. It is characteristic of De Quincey that he is able to see obscure relationships and to hold in mind all sorts of allied ideas. It is equally characteristic that he should wish to point out such relationships and to present many of these ideas no matter how slightly connected they may be with the subject he is discussing. Moreover, the desire to show such relationships and to express his ideas is much stronger in De Quincey's mind than any counter-desire for simplicity of expression and directness of thought might be. As a result, in spite of his remarks concerning compression, De Quincey includes additions and qualifications in his sentences and thus makes a long and involved construction.

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1. Sherman, op. cit., passim, and Gerwig, op. cit., passim. Sherman and Gerwig based their statistics as to the length of De Quincey's sentences on the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, 1821 edition, (first 1000 sentences); Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism, 1835; California, 1852; and China, 1857. They found that there was little variation in the number of words in De Quincey's sentences. The average number of words in a sentence is 32.73. The statistics as to the number of simple sentences were based on The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (first 500 sentences), Rhetoric, (first 100 sentences), and Autobiographical Sketches (first 200 sentences). The per cent of simple sentences is 17.15. cf. also Robert Ray Aurner. The History of Certain Aspects of the Structure of the English Sentence, Philological Quarterly, Vol. 2, (1923), p. 195.

But the different kinds of long complicated sentences that De Quincey uses can best be seen through an analysis of the sentence structure, the arrangement of clauses and phrases within the sentences; and it with these patterns that the next portion of this thesis is concerned.

## II

### Sentence-Structure

At different times, writers<sup>1</sup> have classified English prose sentences according to structure. Although not all the classifications need be considered, I should like to distinguish between the periodic and the loose sentence. Periodicity is taken to mean that the sentence is not grammatically complete until the end, or almost the end, of the sentence is reached. Elements that are essential for completeness are withheld until almost the closing words of the sentence.

The opposite of the periodic sentence is the loose, a sentence grammatically complete at some point well before the end. Elements that complete a statement are placed near the beginning but the sentence continues with qualifications or additions. In general, there are two kinds of loose sentences: (1) that consisting of a principal clause followed by a group of subordinate clauses either dependent on each other or referring back to the principal clause, and

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1. Most analysts of sentence structure follow the basic classifications of Alexander Bain. English Composition and Rhetoric. London: 1887, V. I, New York: 1888, pp. 55-90, and Minto, op.cit., pp. 3-10, making further distinctions as the subject requires. Cf. Lannering, op. cit., Chap. II, and W. K. Wimsatt, The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson, New Haven: 1941, Chap. II; M. W. Croll, The Baroque Style in Prose, Minneapolis, 1921, treats the loose sentence more fully. See also the discussion of these kinds of sentences by T. A. Dunn. Philip Massinger: The Man and Playwright, (unpublished thesis) Edinburgh: 1952, pp. 331 ff.

(2) that consisting of two or more principal clauses related to each other and with or without accompanying subordinate clauses.<sup>1</sup> This second kind of loose "sentence" is in reality a number of individual sentences.<sup>2</sup> But since De Quincey's use of a number of principal clauses in a single elaborate construction shows distinctive features, I have treated such constructions as single sentences, and have not considered a sentence complete until a definite closing mark, such as a full stop or a question mark, has been reached.

Sentences may contain suspended and parenthetical elements. A sentence containing suspensions has elements inserted between words that are grammatically closely related, such as a subject and its verb, a verb and its object, or an adjective and its noun. The inverted elements "suspend," or hold up, the thought, but are integral parts of the construction in that they are grammatically and syntactically dependent on the rest of the sentence. Parenthetical elements belong to an interjected order of ideas. Material is inserted or added which is not syntactically dependent on the rest of the sentence. Such material usually, but not always, occurs at the natural breaks in the sentence, as between clauses. Parenthetical elements have grammatical unity within themselves, although the elements may be so elliptical that they are "telegraphic."

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1. Lannering, op. cit., p. 81.

2. H. W. and F. G. Fowler. A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, Oxford: 1937, pp. 523-524.

Although round brackets ( ) are the most frequent signs of parenthetical material, other marks of punctuation, especially the long dash, are used to indicate it. The determining of what is parenthetical material by the scrutiny of punctuation marks is, in any case, not always possible since the conventions of punctuation are not hard-and-fast.

If words, phrases, and clauses are grammatically and syntactically similar, they are said to be parallel.<sup>1</sup> If such grammatical and syntactic similarity is close, the parallelism is symmetric, as in the following passage: -

"The motions of Barbaria had hitherto indicated only change; change without hope; confusion without tendencies; strife without principle of advance..."<sup>2</sup>

But if the "members of the parallel are not wholly uniform,"<sup>3</sup> the parallelism is said to be asymmetric. The following passage is a representative example of De Quincey's use of asymmetric parallelism in that the final element has been lengthened: -

"The whole elements of the scene were almost scenically disposed; the law of antagonism having perhaps never been employed with so much effect; the little quiet brook presenting a direct antithesis to its grand political character; and the innocent dawn, with its pure untroubled repose, contrasting potently, to a man of any intellectual

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1. See Lannering, op. cit., pp. 21 ff; 57-64.
  2. Posth. Works, V. II, p. 151.
  3. Lannering, op. cit., p. 57.



sensibility, with the long chaos of bloodshed, darkness, and anarchy, which was to take its rise from the apparently trifling acts of this one morning." <sup>1</sup>

Parallel elements balance each other according to the closeness of their grammatical and syntactic similarity. For example, in the first illustration given under parallelism, the balanced effect is quite obvious. In the second illustration, the balanced effect is less apparent. Thus it might be said that parallelism is the grammatical and syntactic similarity of elements; balance is the result of that similarity. <sup>2</sup>

### III

#### Periodicity

De Quincey so frequently avoids completing the thought of his sentences until almost the closing words that periodicity is considered one of his most distinctive stylistic traits. Minto, in discussing the periodic sentence, remarks that "of this periodic style, the most eminent of modern masters is De Quincey." <sup>3</sup>

In spite of his own fondness for periodicity, De Quincey himself complains that its habitual use produces "downright physical exhaustion" in the reader because of the difficulty in keeping in mind the various ideas. De Quincey explains: -

"A sentence, for example, begins with a series of ifs; perhaps a dozen lines are occupied with expanding the conditions under which something is affirmed or denied: here you cannot dismiss and have done with the ideas as you go along, for as yet all is hypothetical; all is suspended in air. The conditions are not fully to be understood until you are acquainted with the dependency;

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1. VI, pp. 249-250. (The Caesars)

2. Minto would classify both symmetric and asymmetric parallelism as "balances" that varied in their degree of equipose, but since asymmetric parallelism is often used by De Quincey, I feel that the additional distinction is necessary.

3. Minto, op. cit., p. 5.

you must give a separate attention to each clause of this complex hypothesis, and yet, having done that by a painful effort, you have done nothing at all; for you must exercise a reacting attention through the corresponding latter section, in order to follow out its relations to all parts of the hypothesis which sustains it. In fact, under the rude yet also artificial character of newspaper style, each separate monster period is a vast arch, which, not receiving its keystone, not being locked into self-supporting cohesion, until you nearly reach the close, imposes of necessity upon the unhappy reader all the onus of its ponderous weight through the main process of its construction. The continued repetition of so Atlantean an effort soon overwhelms your patience..."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey might be justly accused of writing the kind of sentence which he himself says imposes on the reader the "effort and tension of mind in holding on."<sup>2</sup> The following sentence is illustrative of this "vice of periodic syntax":<sup>3</sup>

"At this point, therefore, you will observe that, if the censor persists in rejecting all appeal to creeds as of no importance, if he persists in urging the appeal to the acts of the two parties, in that case, although I deny utterly the pretence that the Tory acts, taken comprehensively, have been less friendly to civil liberty than those of their antagonists, and although I have shown in some cases (and might show in many others) that upon the whole the Whigs have manifested a much greater insensibility to such interests in any case where they happened to clash with personal party objects, - yet, if it had been otherwise, as such hostility to freedom must have arisen from the particular position of the

- 
1. X, pp. 158-159. (Style)
  2. Ibid, p. 162.
  3. Ibid, p. 163.

Tories as the king's ministers at the moment, and not from their particular principles, the censor has precisely the same evil to apprehend from the Whigs, now that their time has come for occupying power and place."<sup>1</sup>

But it is not only in long single sentences that De Quincey makes frequent use of periodicity. Short single sentences may also be periodic, and periodicity may pervade an entire passage as illustrated by the following consecutive sentences: -

"Such were Wordsworth's feelings in regard to new books; of which the first exemplification I had was early in my acquaintance with him, and on occasion of a book which (if any could) justified the too summary style of his advances in rifling its charms. On a level with the eye, when sitting at the tea-table in my little cottage at Grasmere, stood the collective works of Edmund Burke. The book was to me an eye-sore and an ear-sore for many a year in consequence of the cacophonous title lettered by the bookseller upon the back - "Burke's Works." I have heard it said, by the way, that Donne's intolerable defect of ear grew out of his own baptismal name, when harnessed to his own surname - John Donne. No man, it was said, who had listened to this hideous jingle from childish years, could fail to have his genius for discord, and the abominable in sound, improved to the utmost."<sup>2</sup>

Periodicity causes some passages in De Quincey's works to be quite effective. As he himself so accurately pointed out in the passage quoted on page 102, the continued use of this kind of sentence is tiring to the reader. The tension or strain is most apparent in passages containing long periodic sentences, but even in a series of fairly short periodic sentences, the fact that the reader must continually hold his mental breath is likely to cause difficulty.

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1. IX, p. 380. (Political Parties of Modern England)

2. II, pp. 312-313. (The Lake Poets: Wordsworth and Southey)

Moreover, since periodic sentences are slow-moving, they are not suitable for all subjects. Here also, a comment by De Quincey is pertinent. In reviewing Whately's Elements of Rhetoric, De Quincey remarks: -

"Dr. Whately lays it down as a maxim in rhetoric that "elaborate stateliness is always to be regarded as a worse fault than the slovenliness and languor which accompany a very loose style." But surely this is a rash position. Stateliness the most elaborate, in an absolute sense, is no fault at all; though it may happen to be so in relation to a given subject, or to any subject under given circumstances." 1

But the "stateliness" of much of De Quincey's prose is achieved through periodicity, and it is this kind of stateliness which is not appropriate to a given subject or a given circumstance. For example, De Quincey makes use of periodicity in narration, a form for which the periodic sentence is often not suitable. In general, narrative accounts must present their material in a temporal order. That is, events must be arranged chronologically and told as they follow each other in order to avoid confusion. But a periodic sentence is constructed not according to a temporal but to a logical order. It presents not a sequence of events, but a relationship of ideas. Thus, to present consecutive events in the framework of the periodic sentence is to place them in an order which confuses them.

De Quincey uses the periodic sentence to advantage, however, in works whose primary purpose is the presentation of ideas because the time element is less important in this kind of writing. Literary criticism, philosophy, and politics are some of the subjects that

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1. X, p. 130. (Rhetoric)



lend themselves to a logical order of sentence structure. In these fields, De Quincey sometimes uses periodicity brilliantly since it is a form that allows him to present his material with all sorts of preliminary qualifications and hypotheses before making an emphatic point - a practice in which he delights and a method of presentation in which he excels.



He also uses periodicity to good effect in works of impassioned prose. The periodic structure not only provides him with a sentence pattern for rhythmical prose, but the order of events characteristic of periodicity is not inappropriate to the subject. Since De Quincey's impassioned prose is primarily a description of a state of mind at a heightened moment, the time element can be distorted or thrown out of focus. The events themselves may be described vividly, but the order in which they occur is confused and indefinite. Consequently, a sentence pattern which is based on an order other than the temporal and which fails to keep clear the chronology does not jar, but is entirely suitable.

A periodic sentence depends for its effect on the holding up of the thought until almost the closing words, and this holding up in turn is dependent on the syntax of the sentence: the order of the words, phrases, and clauses and the way that these are related to each other. To simplify as much as possible my explanation of the syntactic patterns of De Quincey's periodic sentences, I have

attempted to show them visually by means of the following

abbreviations: -

- S, V, O, C      -principal clause (subject, verb, object or complement)  
(S, O, C, noun cl.) -noun clause used as the subject (or object or complement) of a principal clause.  
(noun cl.)      -noun clause  
(adj. cl.)      -adjectival clause  
(adv. cl.)      -adverbial clause  
(verbid ph.)    -verbid phrase  
noun cl.: s v o, c) -noun clause with the subject, verb, and object or complement shown.  
(S, noun cl.)    -noun clause used as the subject of a subordinate clause. (likewise O, noun cl. and C, noun cl.)  
[ ] ( )          -larger units, that is, clauses within clauses or elements with extended qualifying elements.  
(noun ph.)      -noun and its qualifying elements.

Only significant phrases are indicated. If a phrase is an integral part of a larger unit and in its normal position in the sentence, I have not considered it separately. The relationships between clauses and phrases and the elements that they qualify are shown by lines and arrows:  Elements in apposition are shown thus: 

I have not hesitated to include additional abbreviations when they were self-explanatory.

Two additional points should be noted: -

- (a) I have not shown the specific word to which a qualifying element refers. This causes an adjectival clause to appear as qualifying a verb when in reality it qualifies the noun in a prepositional phrase that modifies the verb.
- (b) I have placed all clauses that refer to the verbs into the adverbial clause group, and all clauses that refer to the nouns into the adjectival clause group.<sup>1</sup> However, I have shown more specific elements when it was necessary to do so.

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1. But with some precedent. See H. W. & F. G. Fowler, The King's English, Oxford: 1931 (3rd ed.), pp. 251-255.

Because of the danger of getting lost in a welter of symbols and the detail of terminology,<sup>1</sup> I have attempted to indicate the sentence patterns as simply as possible and to concentrate on the larger elements. Since some of De Quincey's sentences are very complicated and involved, I have been forced to leave out some smaller sentence elements that were interesting in themselves but not germane to the specific point being presented.

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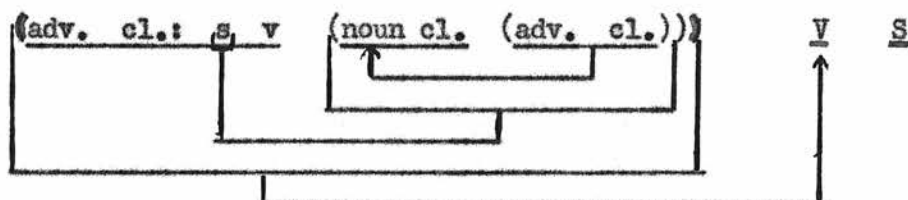
1. De Quincey may use a common periodic sentence-pattern: a group of subordinate clauses or a single subordinate clause followed by a principal clause. He uses most often introductory conditional and hypothetical clauses, and, in spite of his own already-cited comment, he is likely to use a number of conditional clauses at the beginning of this periodic sentences. In the following example, De. Quincey has inverted the subject-verb order of the principal clause and has used one of his favourite devices in the subordinate clause, the impersonal "it," followed by an intransitive verb and a noun clause in apposition: -

"But if at any time it happened that Wordsworth, or anybody else interested in the theme, came into Coleridge's study whilst he was commencing his periodical lucubrations,

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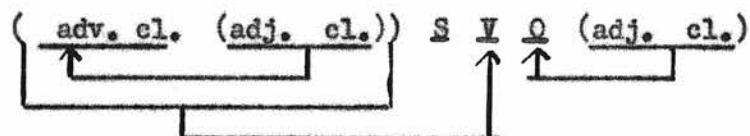
1. notable example: Zilpha E. Chandler. An Analysis of the Stylistic Technique of Addison, Johnson, Hazlitt, and Pater. University of Iowa Humanistic Studies, Vol. IV., No. 3, Iowa City: 1931, pp. 7-110.

and, naturally enough, led him into an oral disquisition upon it, then perished all chance for that week's fulfilment of the contract."<sup>1</sup>



But very often, De Quincey uses a variant of this first pattern. He uses the preliminary subordinate clause or clauses to introduce the subject, the principal clause to give the main idea of the sentence, and additional subordinate elements to complete the thought in a more definite manner. The following example begins with a temporal clause and concludes with the abbreviation viz.: -

"When I referred to the dark genius of the family who once tolled funeral knells in the ears of the first Bourbon, I meant, of course, the first who sat upon the throne of France, viz., Henri Quatre."<sup>2</sup>



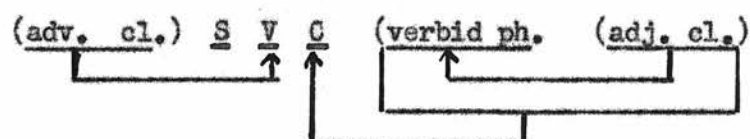
In the following sentence, the thought is held up by an introductory conditional clause containing repetition and completed and

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1. III, p. 75 (London Reminiscences)
  2. Posth. Works, I, p. 144. (France Past and France Present)



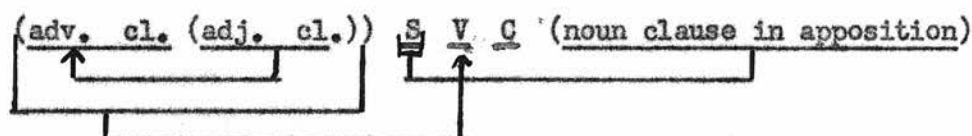
sharpened, as it were, by the concluding adjective clause: -

"If personal accidents, and accidents so trivial, could to any serious extent, be amongst the causes of war, then it would become a hopeful duty to preconcert personal combinations that should take an opposite direction."<sup>1</sup>



The following similar example shows the thought completed in a concluding noun clause used in apposition to the subject of the sentence: -

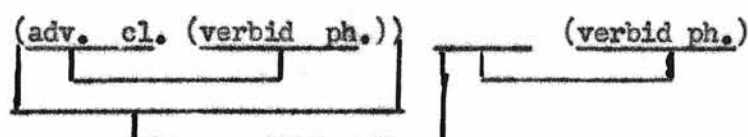
"But, if this faculty suffers from the decay of solitude, which is becoming a visionary idea in England, on the other hand it is certain that some merely physical agencies can and do assist the faculty of dreaming almost preternaturally."<sup>2</sup>



There are a great many variations of this same basic pattern.

Perhaps one of the most interesting is De Quincey's use of it in an elliptical exclamatory inversion: -


"If casual causes could be supposed chiefly to have promoted war, how easy for a nation to arrange permanent and determinate causes against it!"<sup>3</sup>



1. VIII, p. 379. (On War)
2. XIII, P. 335. (Suspiria de Profundis)
3. VIII, p. 379. (On War)


2. De Quincey will also construct a periodic sentence by using introductory phrases followed by a principal clause. But this method is much less common, for De Quincey's fondness for long sentences make him almost always run to clauses in his introductory material. The following periodic sentence is constructed in this manner through the inversion of a verbid phrase: -

"Habitually to dream magnificently, a man must have a constitutional determination to reverie."<sup>1</sup>

(verbid ph.)    S    V    O  


The following example contains an introductory verbid phrase in combination with inverted prepositional phrases: -

"Returning to our sketch of the Caesars, at the head of the third series we place Decius."<sup>2</sup>

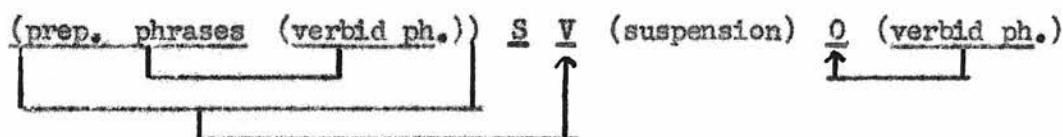
(verbid ph.)    (prep. ph.)    S    V    O  


De Quincey also uses a variant of this second basic pattern. He uses a series of introductory phrases to introduce the subject, a principal clause to show the general thought which then is made more specific in the concluding subordinate elements.<sup>3</sup> The

- 
1. XIII, p. 334 (Suspiria de Profundis)
  2. VI, p. 385. (The Caesars)
  3. De Quincey follows this quite common periodic practice fairly consistently. The concluding elements "round off" the sentence.

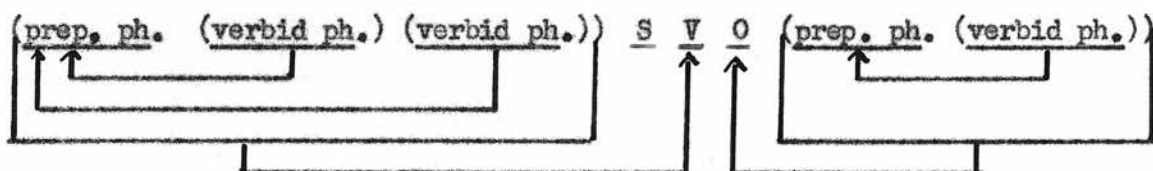
The following example contains also a parenthesis ("at least in the mandarin class") and a suspension ("in the event of any more extended intercourse with China") : -

"With a government capable of frauds like these, and a People (at least in the mandarin class) trained through centuries to a conformity of temper with their Government, we shall find, in the event of any more extended intercourse with China, the greatest difficulty in maintaining the just equations of rank and privilege."<sup>1</sup>



The following sentence is a more direct example of the same kind of construction: -

"From such vestiges of derivative grandeur, propagated to ages so remote from itself, and sustained by manners so different from the spirit of her own, we may faintly measure the strength of the original impulse given to the feelings of men by the sacred majesty of the Roman throne."<sup>2</sup>

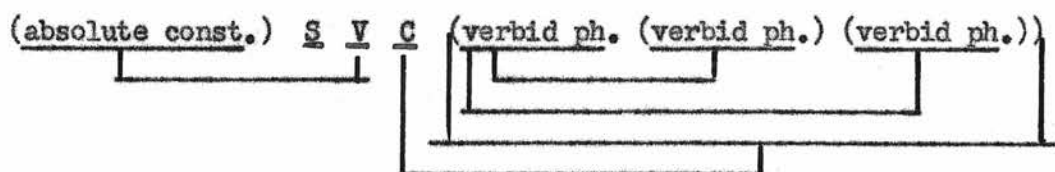


De Quincey uses many variations of this construction. For example, the following sentence begins with an absolute construction and concludes with symmetrically parallel verbid phrases: -

"This interest being in its nature so personal, and the name of the Tartar here so notorious, it had been found

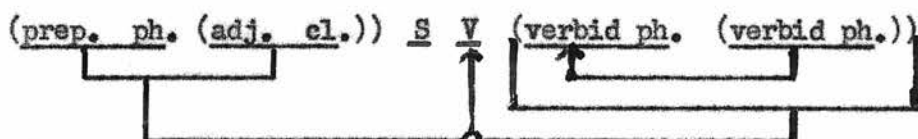
1. XIV, p. 356. (The Chinese Question in 1857.)  
2. VI, p. 231. (The Caesars)

impossible for the imperial government to throw their mendacity into its usual form of blank denial applied to the total result, or of intricate transformation applied to the details."<sup>1</sup>



3. De Quincey frequently combines these first two kinds of periodic sentence-structure. In such combinations, the sentence usually begins with a phrase, is followed by a subordinate clause, and a main clause, and is concluded with subordinate elements which complete the thought. The basic pattern is seen in the following sentences: -

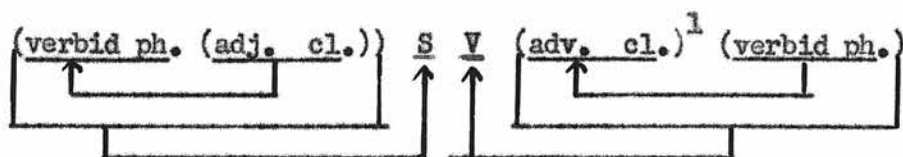
"In this series of conduct, which in all poetical justice should have conducted Mr. George very rapidly to a horse-pond, we are surprised to find him held up by Mrs. Pichler as a fit subject for enlightened sympathy."<sup>2</sup>



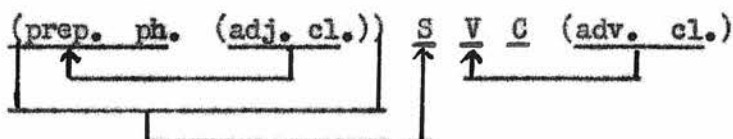
"Considering the exquisite quality of some poems which Coleridge has composed, nobody can grieve (or has grieved more) than ourselves at seeing so beautiful a fountain choked with weeds."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. XIV, p. 357. (The Chinese Question in 1857)
  2. Gillies German Stories, op. cit., p. 861.
  3. V, p. 207. (Coleridge and Opium-Eating)





"Amongst all the illustrations which might illuminate this truth, none is so instructive as the large question of PAGAN ORACLES."<sup>2</sup>

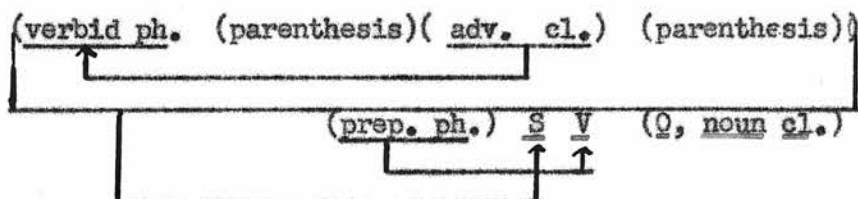


De Quincey often uses this sentence pattern, probably for the following reasons: First, the phrase-clause combination is a graceful transitional device. The opening phrase may refer to the previous sentence and the clause leads into the sentence itself. Secondly, in long sentences the combination allows him to vary the presentation of the preliminary material. The clauses can be used to add to or to qualify the ideas expressed in the phrases. Thirdly, the phrase-clause combination can be a rhythmical device, a fact that must have appealed to De Quincey. De Quincey may make a sentence longer without changing the phrase-clause combination. The following example will show what I mean. It should be noted that the sentence contains two parentheses: "interesting enough in itself" and "this question

- 
1. I have called "than ourselves" an adverbial clause of comparison although Fowler, op. cit., p. 629, presents some reasons for considering such constructions prepositional phrases.
  2. VII, p. 45. (The Pagan Oracles)

waived, and confining ourselves to the comparison of those four monarchies which actually existed": -

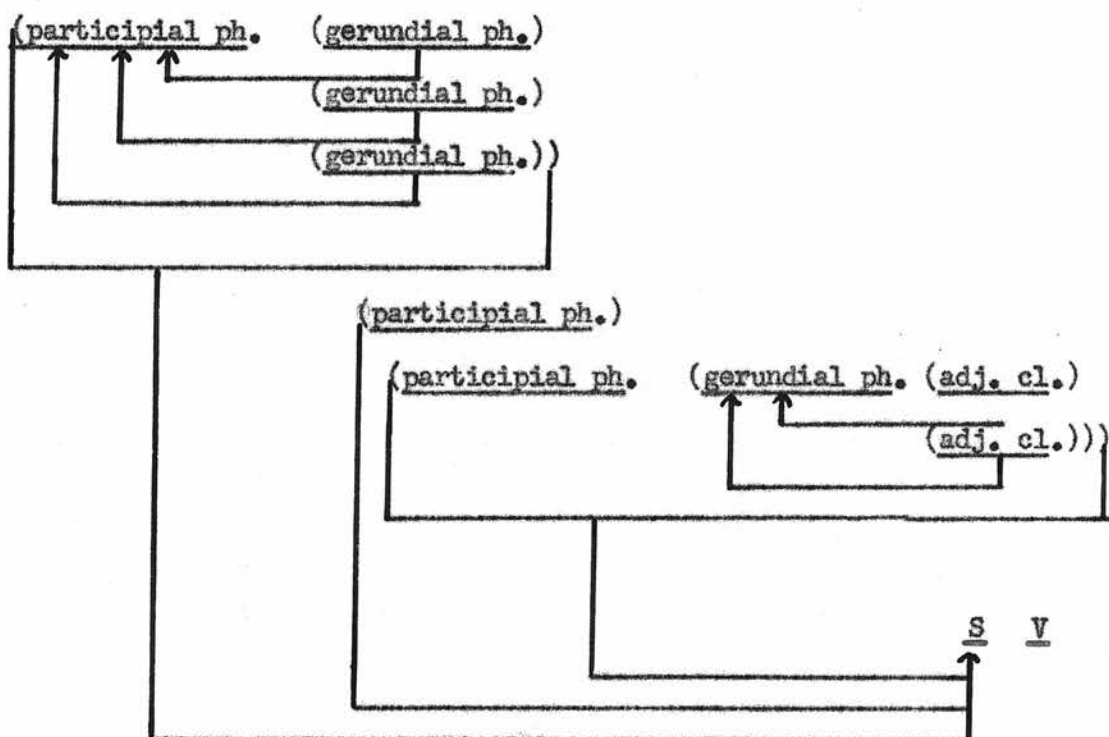
"However, waiving the question (interesting enough in itself) whether upon earthly principles, a fifth universal empire could by possibility arise in the present condition of knowledge for man individually and of organization for man in general - this question waived, and confining ourselves to the comparison of those four monarchies which actually have existed, - of the Assyrian, or earliest, we may remark that it found men in no state of cohesion."<sup>1</sup>



Most of De Quincey's variants of the introductory phrase-clause combination consist in changing the relationships of the phrases and clauses and adding modifying elements. The following sentence is highly involved: -

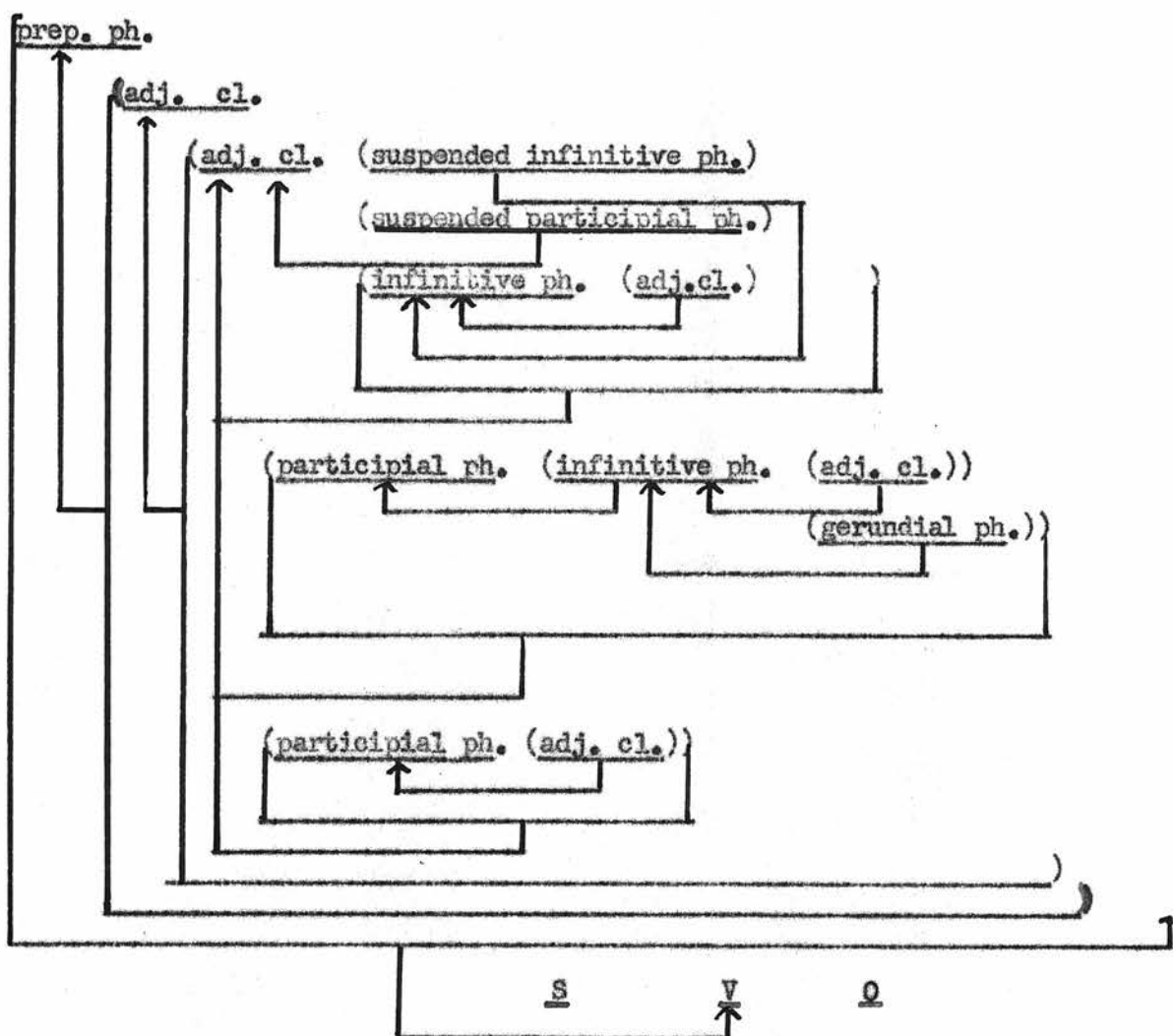
"Prevented by the custom from putting questions, from proposing doubts, from asking for explanations, reacting by no mode of mental activity, and condemned also to the mental distress of hearing opinions or doctrines stream past them by flights which they must not arrest for a moment so as even to take note of them, and which yet they could not often understand, or, seeming to understand, could not always approve, the audience sank at times into a condition of inanimate vacuity."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. VI, pp. 231-232. (The Caesars)
  2. X, p. 282. (Conversation)



The following passage is another example of this same kind of involved structure. De Quincey piles phrase upon phrase and clause upon clause in order to hold in suspense the thought until the close point. The sentence is an excellent example of De Quincey's skill in manipulating the introductory elements to achieve a periodic climax: -

"In that account which "The Excursion" presents to us of an imaginary Scotsman who, to still the tumult of his heart, when visiting the cataracts of a mountainous region, obliges himself to study the laws of light and colour as they affect the rainbow of the stormy waters, vainly attempting to mitigate the fever which consumed him by entangling his mind in profound speculations; raising a crossfire of artillery from the subtilizing intellect, under the vain conceit that in this way he could silence the mighty battery of his impassioned heart: there we read a picture of Wordsworth and his own youth."<sup>1</sup>



In this sentence, the relationships between the phrases and the clauses are very involved. The introductory prepositional phrase "in that account" is modified by an adjectival clause, which in turn is modified by another adjectival clause containing phrases and clauses related to each other. The whole construction is used adverbially in that it refers to the finite verb "read" which appears near the close of the sentence. In spite of the intricate arrangement, the sentence is not a confused one. The thought can be followed without difficulty.

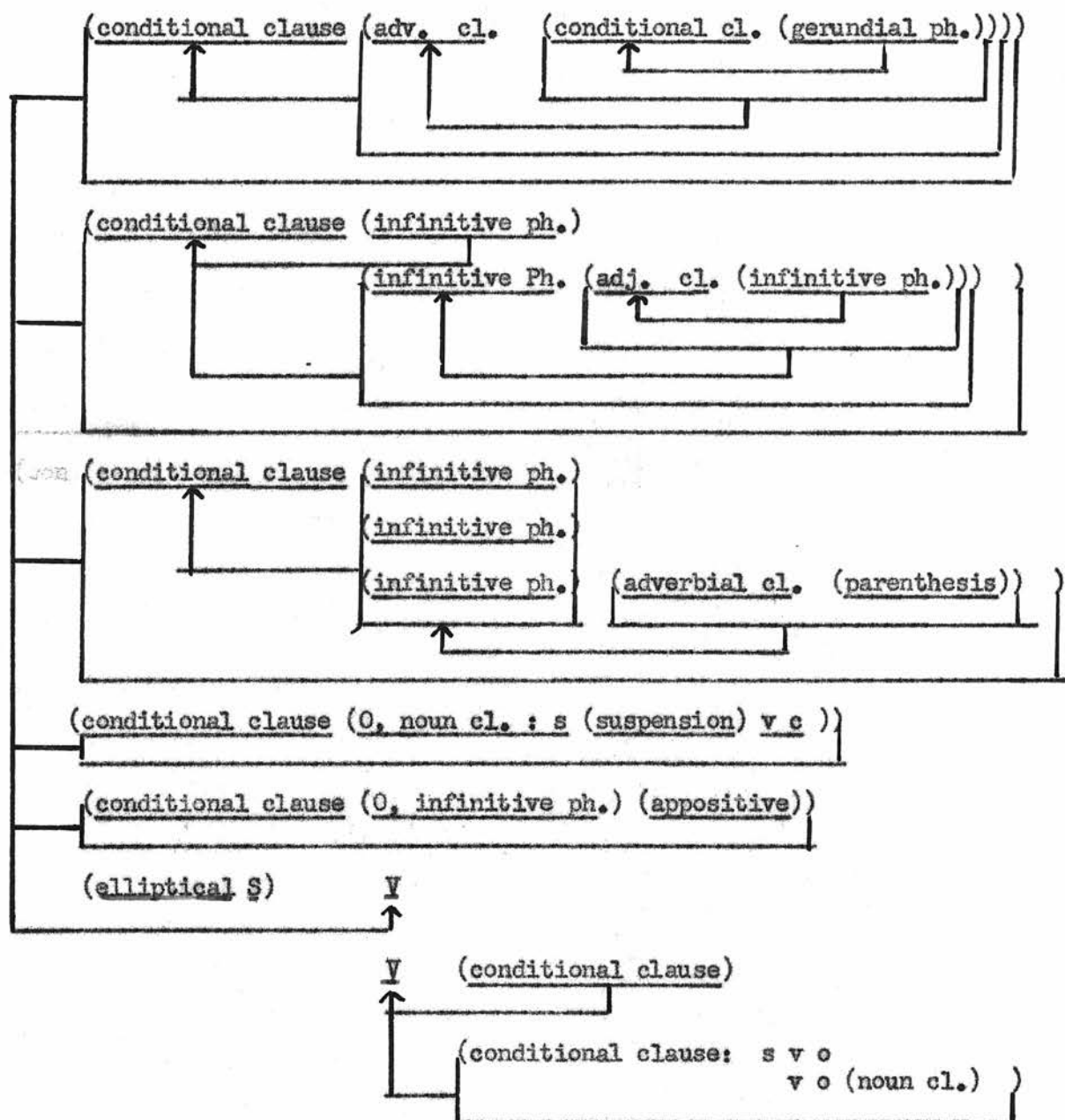


Sometimes De Quincey shows almost unbelievable skill in holding up the thought until the delayed principal clause. In the next example, he has used a complicated, inter-woven series of conditional clauses to express his emotion. The intensity of the expression rises in a remarkable crescendo through intricate introductory elements until it reaches its peak in a final emphatic periodic close. It is one of De Quincey's most competent constructions and illustrates his mastery of the periodic sentence as a means of presenting vividly his feeling on a personal question: -

"But suppose them to have done so, as, in fact, even in this case, they might have done, had they not published their intention of driving a regular trade in libel and in slander; suppose them insolently to beard you in public haunts, to cross your path continually when in company with the very female relative upon whom they had done their best to point the finger of public scorn; and suppose them further, by the whole artillery of contemptuous looks, words, gestures, and unrepressed laughter, to republish, as it were, ratify, and publicly to apply, personally, their own original libel, as often as chance or as opportunity (eagerly improved) should throw you together in places of general resort; and suppose, finally, that the central figure - nay, in their account, the very butt throughout this entire drama of malice - should chance to be an innocent, gentle-hearted, dejected, suffering woman, utterly unknown to her persecutors, and selected as their martyr merely for her relationship to yourself; suppose her, in short, to be your wife - a lovely young woman sustained by womanly dignity, or else ready to sink into the earth with shame, under the cruel and unmanly insults heaped upon her, and having no protector on earth but yourself; lay all this together, and then say whether, in such a case, the most philosophic or the most Christian patience might not excusably give way; whether flesh and blood could do otherwise than give way, and seek redress for the past, but, at all events, security for the future, in what, perhaps, might be the sole course open to you, - an appeal to arms."<sup>1</sup>

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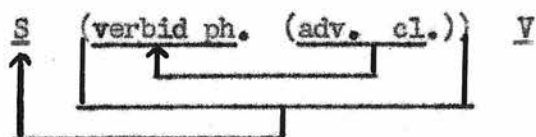
1. III, pp. 182-183. (London Reminiscences)



with its intricate arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses, leads to the final appositional phrase, "an appeal to arms," which completes the thought of the sentence.

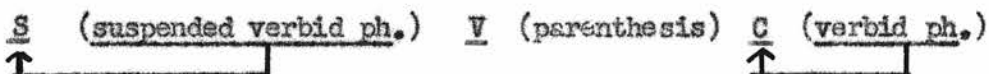
4. De Quincey may construct a periodic sentence by suspending clauses and phrases between a subject and a verb. In the following sentence, the suspended verbid phrase-clause combination achieves only a slight periodicity: -

"War, so far from ending because war was forbidden and nationally renounced, on the contrary would transmigrate into a more fearful shape."<sup>1</sup>



Such a suspension between a subject and a verb may consist of verbid phrases as shown in the next example. The sentence illustrates also a not uncommon failing of De Quincey in that the second verbid phrase ("burying himself...") is a dangling construction since the word to which the phrase refers is not clearly indicated: -

"And the restless activity of Coleridge's mind, in chasing abstract truths, and burying himself in the dark places of human speculation, seemed to me, in a great measure, an attempt to escape out of his own personal wretchedness."<sup>2</sup>

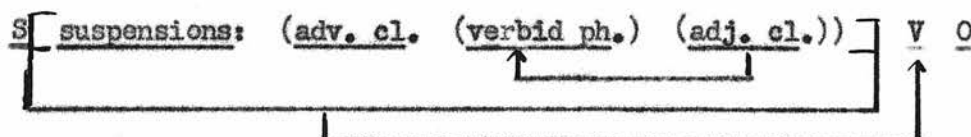



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1. VIII, p. 382. (On War)  
 2. II, p. 161. (Literary Reminiscences: Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

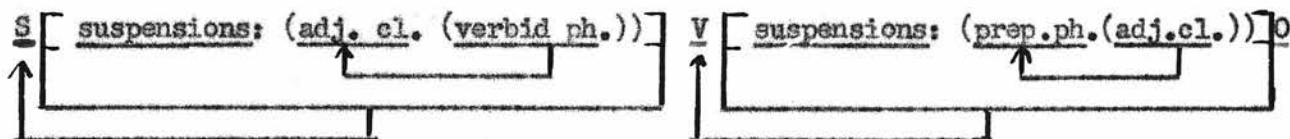
He may also use a clause-verbid phrase combination between the subject and the verb: -

"I, when my Alcaics had run down their foolish larum, instead of resuming my official seat as one of the trinity who composed the head class, took a seat by Lady Carbery."<sup>1</sup>



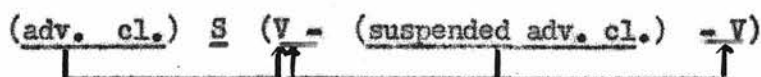
The insertions in the following sentence are worthy of note in that (a) they are placed between subject and verb, and verb-phrases and object, (b) both may be regarded as suspensions in that neither can be omitted without altering the meaning of the sentence radically, and (c) the marks of punctuation used to set them apart from the rest of the sentence are not the same: -

"Consequently, this separation, which proved an eternal one, and contributed to deepen my constitutional propensity to gloomy meditation, had for me (partly on that account, but much more through the sudden birth of perfect independence which so unexpectedly it opened) the value of a revolutionary experience."<sup>2</sup>



De Quincey occasionally uses a suspension within the verb phrase itself: -

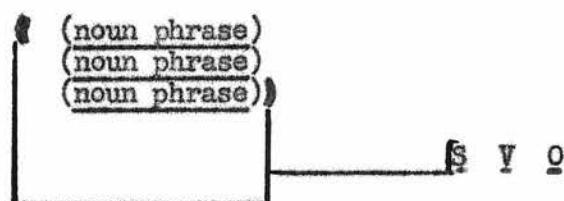
"And yet, had these coincidences then been observed, they would certainly - now that strong suspicions had been directed to the man from the extraordinary character of his nocturnal precautions - not have passed without investigation."<sup>3</sup>



1. I, p. 397. (Autobiography)
2. I, p. 115. (Autobiography)
3. Ibid., p. 392.

5. Some of De Quincey's periodic sentences contain what might be termed an "expanded subject." This may consist of a series of nouns placed outside the sentence proper, a kind of periodicity achieved through elements in "extraposition."<sup>1</sup> In the following example, the series is a balanced one: -

"King and priest, warrior and maiden, philosopher and child, all must walk those mighty galleries alone."<sup>2</sup>

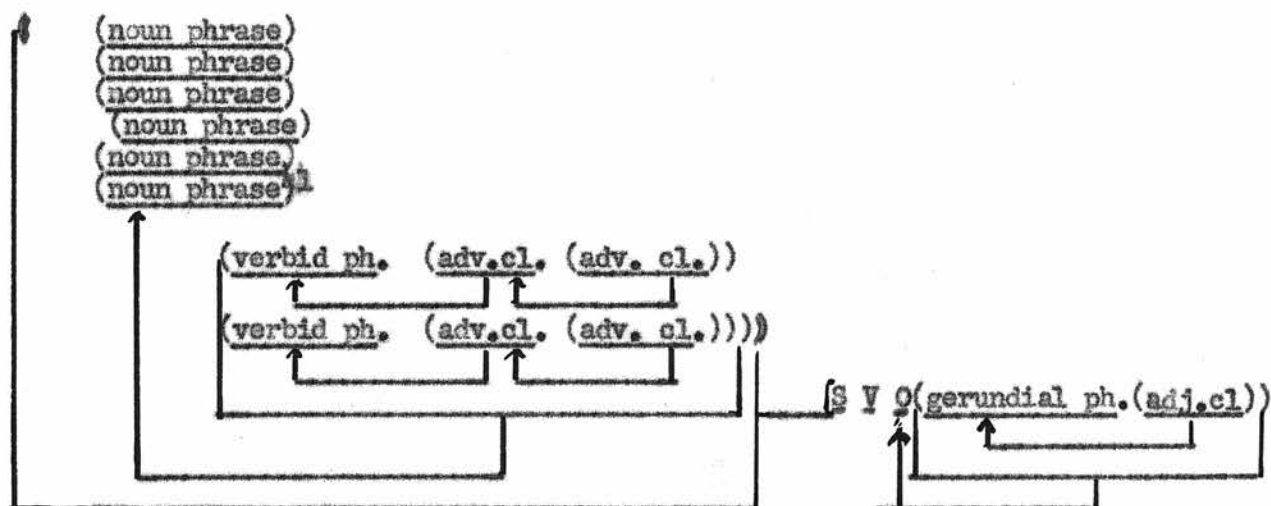


The series of extrapositional elements may possess modifiers which also contribute to the suspensory effect: -

"The trackless forest, the unbridged river, the howling wilderness, the fierce Mahometan bigotry of the Moor, the lawlessness of the Pagan native, the long succession of petty despots - looking upon you with cruel contempt if you travel as a poor man, but as a godsend for wrecking, if you travel as a rich one, - all these chances of ruin, with the climate superadded, leave too little or rational hopefulness to such an enterprise for sustaining those genial spirits without which nothing of that nature can prosper."<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. Otto Jespersen. Essentials of English Grammar. London: 1933. p. 95.
  2. I, p. 48. (Autobiography)
  3. V, p. 291. (Professor Wilson: Sketch in 1850)

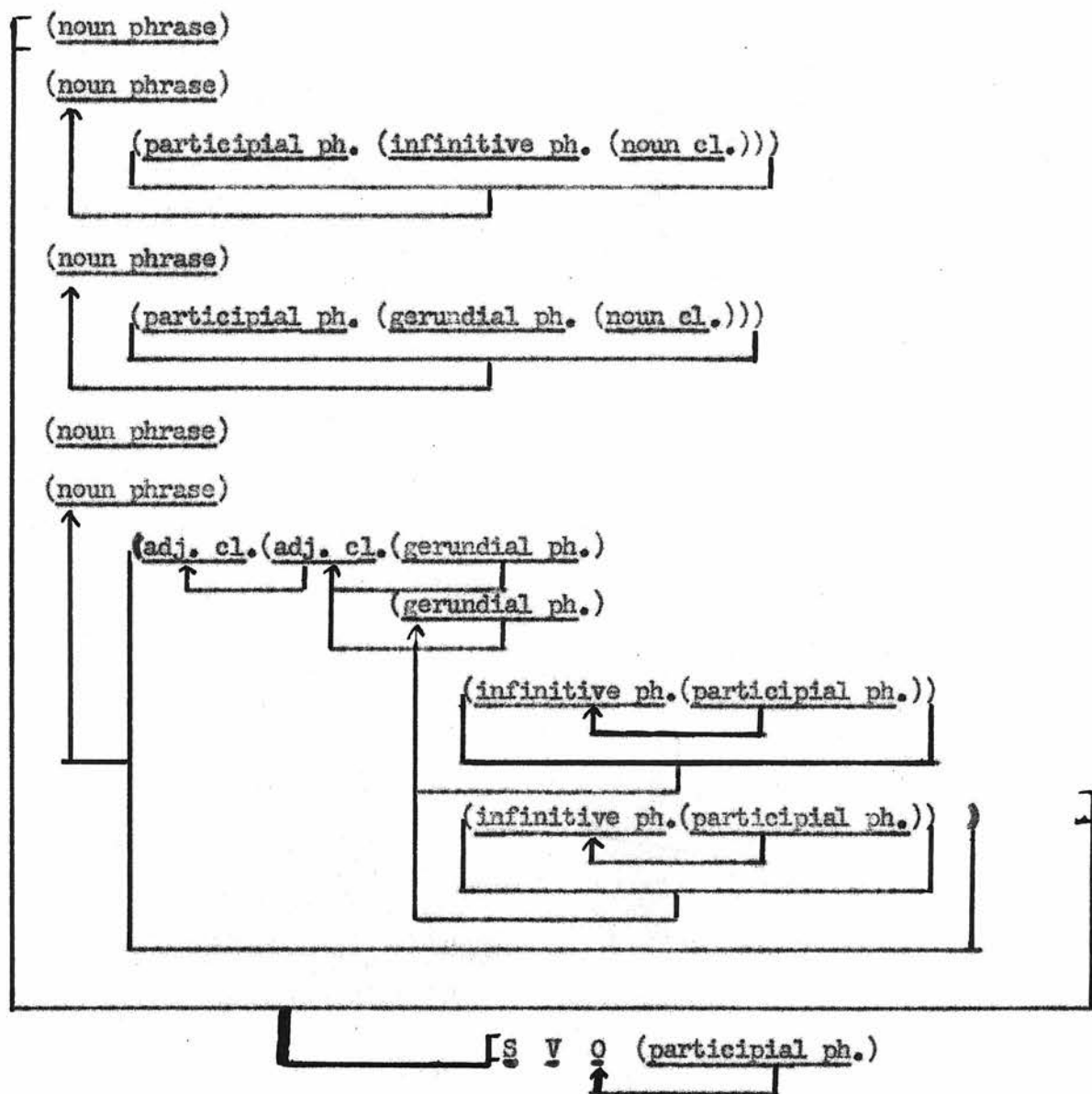




The extrapositional elements may be very long and involved. The following sentence is remarkably effective in asymmetric arrangement of nouns and modifying elements: -

"The frenzy of an earth-born or a hell-born inspiration; divinity of stormy music sweeping round us in eddies, in order to prove that for us there could be nothing divine; the grandeur of a prophet's voice rising in angry gusts, by way of convincing us that all prophets were swinders; oracular scorn of oracles; frantic efforts, such as might seem reasonable in one who was scaling the heavens, for the purpose of degrading all things, making man to be the most abject of necessities as regarded his origin, to be the blindest of accidents as regarded his expectations: these fierce antinomies expose a mode of insanity, but of insanity affecting a sublime intellect."<sup>2</sup>

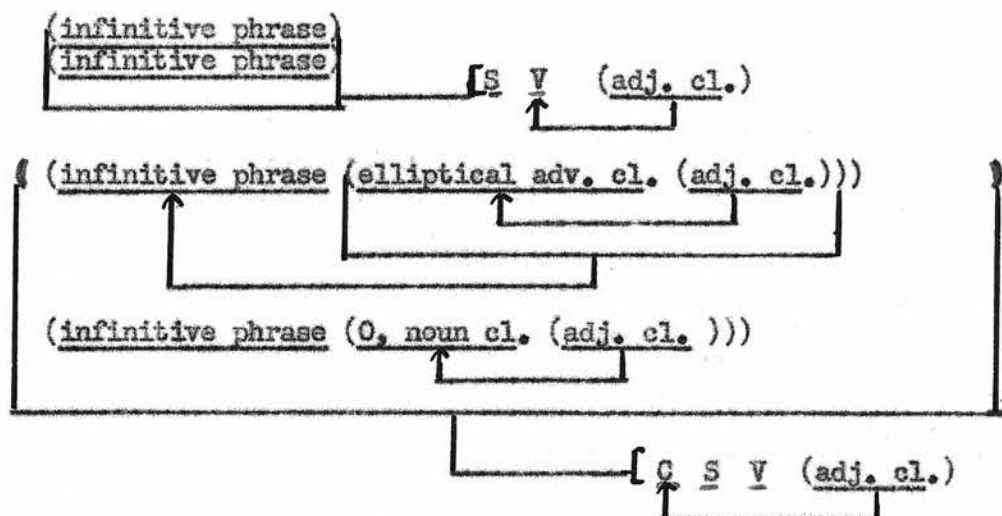
1. If "all" be taken as the pronoun of totality, then the series of nouns in the first example can be taken as antecedents, but it seems to me that in both the examples on this and the preceding page, the extrapositional nouns are in apposition with the subject of the sentence.
2. XI, p. 379. (Gilfillan's Literary Portraits: Keats)



Verbid phrases may also be placed in extraposition. The following passage shows this device used in two consecutive sentences. It should be noted that it is the extension of the extrapositional verbid phrase

that gives the second sentence its periodicity. The first sentence is not truly periodic: -

"To die, to die early, that belongs to the chances of the profession which the soldier has adopted. But to die as an aide-de-camp in the act of riding across a field of battle with some unimportant order that has not even been delivered - to feel that a sacrifice so vast for the sufferer will not stir a ripple on the surface of that mighty national interest for which the sacrifice has been made - this it is which, in such a case, makes the pang of dying."<sup>1</sup>



The subject may be expanded into a long noun clause which holds the thought in abeyance. The following sentence contains also a suspension which repeats the subject of the noun clause itself and which delays the thought still further: -

"That an interpretation so idle of the refined differences between two parties arising in the very bosom of civilization, and at the most intellectual era of the most intellectual of nations, - interpretations so gross

1. V, p. 291. (Professor Wilson: Sketch in 1850)

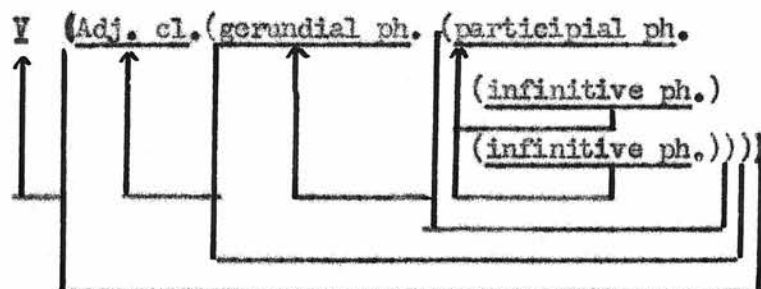
of differences so spiritual, - ever could have been entertained by reflective men, is marvellous."<sup>1</sup>

(S. noun cl. (suspended noun and qualifying elements)) Y C

He may use a series of noun clauses to hold up the thought. The following passage contains also subordinate elements following the principal clause, De Quincey's method of rounding off his periodic sentences gracefully: -

"Whatsoever in knowledge inflates with windy conceit, whatsoever (if any does) brutalizes by keeping the mind under the pressure of the material - the Tangible - the definite, whatsoever deals with powers not above human agency but subject to man's fingering and manipulation, - all the business of the furnace and the dissecting room, - will be steadily maintained and patronized at the expence of every kind and order of knowledge which exalts or refines human feelings by fixing them upon objects raised above our skill to comprehend and our power to control."<sup>2</sup>

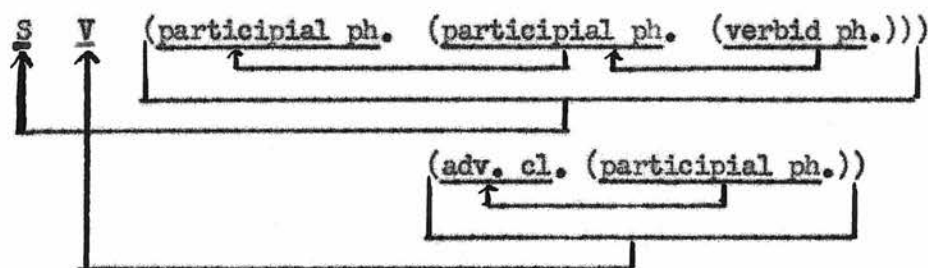
(S. noun cl.)  
 (S. noun cl.) (parenthesis) (gerundial Ph.)  
 (S. noun cl.)  
 (suspended phrase)



1. IX, p. 372. (Political Parties of Modern England)
2. Reform, op. cit.

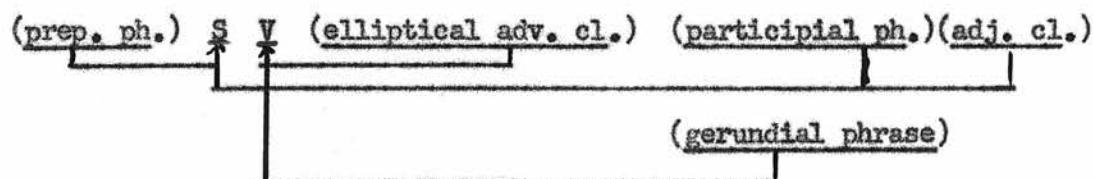
6. De Quincey may also form a periodic sentence by using a principal clause followed by a group of subordinate clauses or phrases.<sup>1</sup> Since this is a sentence-structure that lends itself more readily to looseness than to periodicity, such sentences are not as common as those constructed by means of introductory phrases or clauses. The following example is representative: -

"This jealousy cannot, by any possibility, be rendered so keen and effective if lodged comprehensively and indiscriminately, for all parts of the constitution, in the same general hands, charged alternately with the duty of repressing the Crown and the People, as it would be if assigned dramatically, by separate parts or castings, to separate agents."<sup>2</sup>



More often De Quincey will begin this kind of construction with a short introductory clause or phrase to make a transition or to present an additional preliminary point: -

"As to the good and generous, they cannot travel so much as a Jewish Sabbath-day's journey in company with another, participating in common purposes for the time, and liable to common possibilities of danger, without recognising something beyond a stranger's claim to offices of kindness or courtesy in the transient relations of a fellow-traveller."<sup>3</sup>

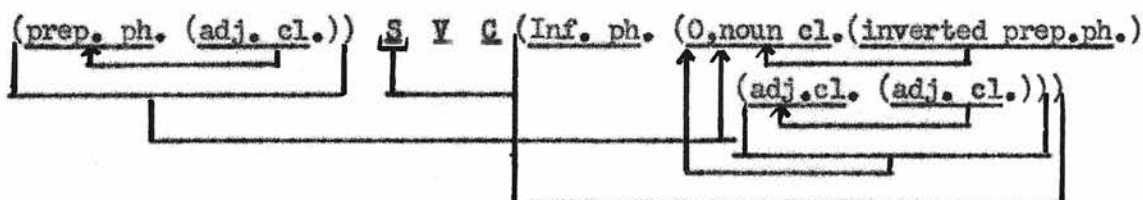


1. But cf. pages 112-113. A short clause or phrase frequently follows the main clause of a sentence introduced by phrase or clauses which hold up the thought.
2. IX, p. 373. (Political Parties of Modern England)
3. V, p. 48. (Dr. Samuel Parr).



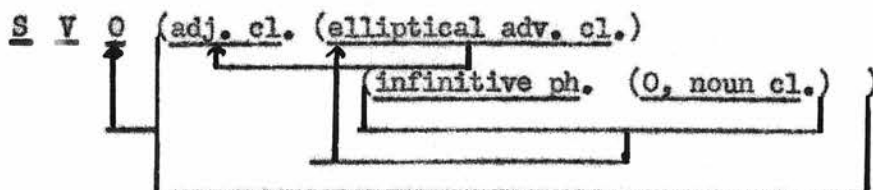
Sometimes a considerable portion of the thought is held up before the principal clause. In the following sentence, the thought moves easily from the phrase-clause combination through the principal clause to end in a quite natural periodic close: -

"Else, and in relation to other modes of beauty, where his sense of the true, and of its distinction from the spurious, had been an acquired sense, it is impossible for us to hide from ourselves that, not through habits only, not through stress of injurious accidents only, but by original structure and temperament of mind, Lamb had a bias towards those very defects on which rested the startling characteristics of style which we have been noticing."<sup>1</sup>



De Quincey may follow what is usually the pattern of a loose sentence but by the use of anticipative words make the construction slightly periodic: -

"You remember the case of that Frenchman who, at an early stage of the French Revolution, wished earnestly for a prolongation of his life, on no higher interest than that of a novel-reader, - in order, viz, to know "how it would end.""<sup>2</sup>



- 
1. V, p. 234. (Charles Lamb)
  2. IX, p. 314. (Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism)

In a similar manner, De Quincey may make a sentence containing more than one principal clause periodic by using words that continue to suspend the thought through successive elements. Frequently such words ("suspensive couples")<sup>1</sup> are correlative conjunctions as in the following example: -

"To hang upon one's own thoughts as an object of conscious interest, to play with them, to watch and pursue them through a maze of inversions, evolutions, and harlequin changes, implies a condition of society either, like that in the monastic ages, forced to intovert its energies from mere defect of books (whence arose the scholastic metaphysics, admirable for its subtlety, but famishing the mind whilst it sharpened its edge in one exclusive direction); or if it implies no absolute starvation of intellect, as in the case of the Roman rhetoric, which arose upon a considerable (though not very various) literature, it proclaims at least a quiescent state of the public mind, unoccupied with daily novelties, and at leisure from the agitations of eternal change."<sup>2</sup>

(S, inf. ph.)

(S, inf. ph.)                      V   O   (part. ph. (inf. ph. (parenthesis)))

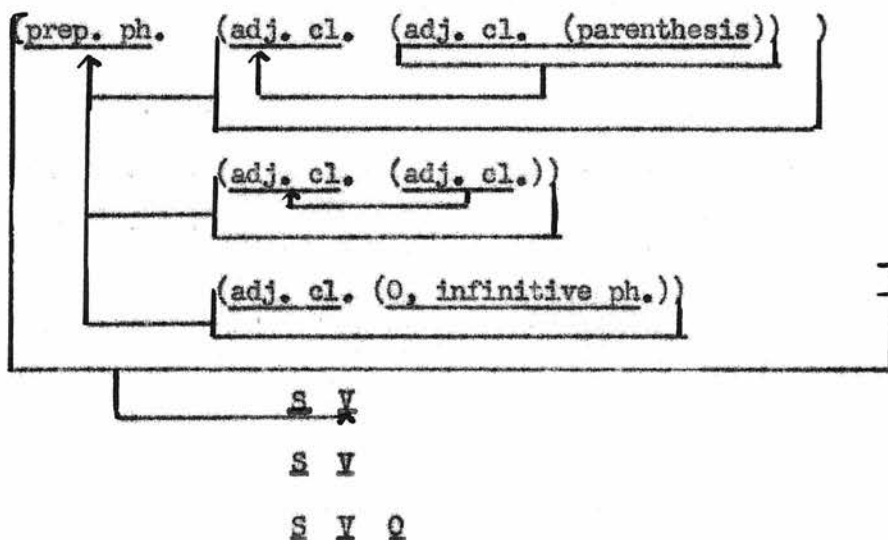
(S, inf. ph.)

(adv. cl. (adj. cl. (parenthesis)))                      S   V   O

- 
1. Bain, op. cit., p. 62.
  2. X, p. 97. (Rhetoric)

7. At the conclusion of a periodic sentence, De Quincey may use a device common to periodic stylists, the presentation of an additional emphatic point after the thought of the sentence has been closed. He thus achieves what might be called two peaks of periodicity, the second peak being a minor one: -

"Out of pure anguish that the scheme which he had meant for the sudden glorification of his master had recoiled (according to all worldly interpretation) in his utter ruin; that the sudden revolution, through a democratic movement, which was to raise himself and his brother apostles into Hebrew princes, had scattered them like sheep without a shepherd; and that, superadded to this common burden of ruin, he personally had to bear a separate load of conscious disobedience to God and insupportable responsibility; naturally enough, out of all this he fell into fierce despair; his heart broke; and under that storm of affliction he hanged himself."<sup>1</sup>



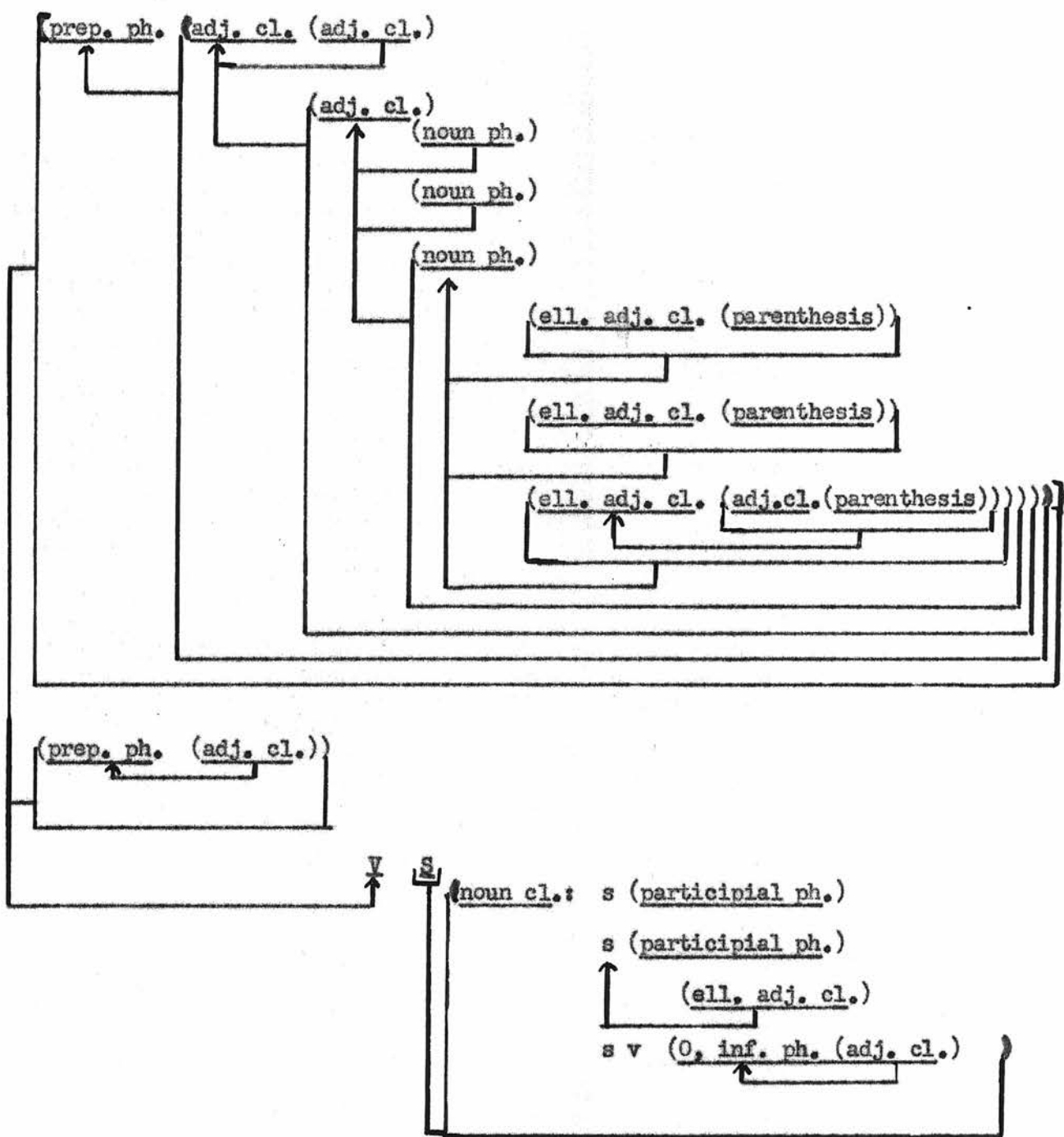
1. VIII, p. 197. (Judas Iscariot)

8. In a long periodic sentence, De Quincey may combine almost all of the techniques I have discussed. One example should suffice. The passage quoted is an indication of the extended periodic construction De Quincey may produce when he is verbose. He cannot bring himself to present his argument without first including almost all of the preliminary matter that is brought to his mind. He must, in a leisurely manner, explore all the bypaths, mention all possible examples, and make all comparisons. Yet, it must be admitted that, in spite of the excess of material, he never quite loses the thread of his discourse, but carries the thought deftly to its conclusion: -

"Even in the oratory of our own time, which oftentimes discusses questions to the whole growth and motion of which we have been ourselves parties present or even accessory, questions which we have followed in their first emersion and separation from the clouds of general politics - their advance, slow or rapid, towards a domineering interest in the public passions; their meridian altitude; and perhaps their precipitous descent downwards, whether from the consummation of their objects (as in the questions of the Slave Trade, of Catholic Emancipation, of East India Monopoly), or from a partial victory and compromise with the abuse (as in the purification of that Augean stable, prisons, and, still more, private houses for the insane), or from the accomplishment of one stage or so in a progress which by its nature is infinite (as in the various steps taken towards the improvement and towards the extension of education): -even in cases like these, when the primary and ostensible object of the speaker already on its own account possesses a commanding attraction, yet will it often happen that the secondary questions growing out of the leading one, the great elementary themes suggested to the speaker by the concrete case before him - as, for instance, the general question of the Test laws, or the still higher and transcendent question of Religious Toleration and the relations between the State and religious opinions, or the general history of Slavery and the commerce in the human species, the general principles of Economy as applied to monopolies, the past usages of mankind in their treatment of prisoners or of lunatics - these comprehensive and transcendent themes are continually allowed to absorb and throw into the shade for a time the minor but more urgent question of the moment through which they have gained their interest."<sup>1</sup>

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1. X, pp. 333-334. (A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature in its Foremost Pretensions)





#### IV

##### Loose Sentences

1. Some of De Quincey's loose sentences are constructed according to a common pattern, that of a principal clause followed by subordinate clauses and phrases. The principal clause expresses the principal thought; the subordinate elements provide additional information or qualifications: -

"The public selfishness gave way, when the danger of the bishop was made known."<sup>1</sup>

S V O (adv. cl.)

"We are bound to know the Emperor's pleasure through those whom he deposes to us as his representatives."<sup>2</sup>

S V {verbid ph. (adj. cl. (adv. cl.))}

Although the principal clause-subordinate elements arrangement is one of the basic patterns of loose sentences, sentences as short as the two examples are not numerous in De Quincey's writings. Not only does De Quincey use relatively few short sentences of any kind but as a sentence containing a single principal clause and additional subordinate elements is easily made periodic, De Quincey is more likely to place the subordinate elements at the beginning or to invert significant portions of the sentence. So often does he throw such sentences into periodicity that, if the second example were to read "to know the Emperor's pleasure through those whom he deposes to us as his representatives we are bound, " It would seem to have more of

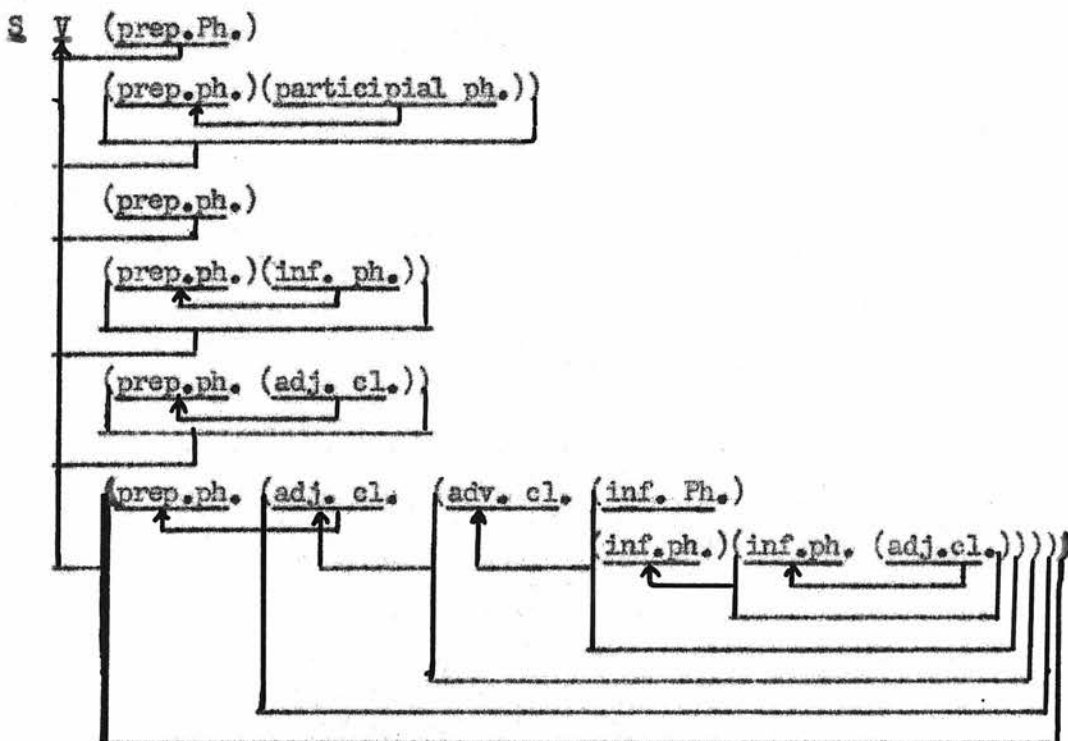
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1. I, p. 254. (Autobiography)  
 2. XIV, p. 209, (The Opium Question with China in 1840)

the De Quincey flavour than it does as a loose sentence.

1. But longer sentences constructed with subordinate elements following a single principal clause are found throughout De Quincey's works. The subordinate elements may be asymmetrically parallel as are the prepositional phrases in the following example: -

"They were told of the oppressions of Russia; of her pride and haughty disdain evidenced towards them by a thousand acts; of her contempt for their religion; of her determination to reduce them to absolute slavery; of the preliminary measures she had already taken by erecting forts upon many of the great rivers in their neighbourhood; of the ulterior intentions she thus announced to circumscribe their pastoral lands, until they would all be obliged to renounce their flocks, and to collect in towns like Sarepta, there to pursue mechanical and servile trades of shoemaker, tailor and weaver, such as the free-born Tartar had always disdained."<sup>1</sup>

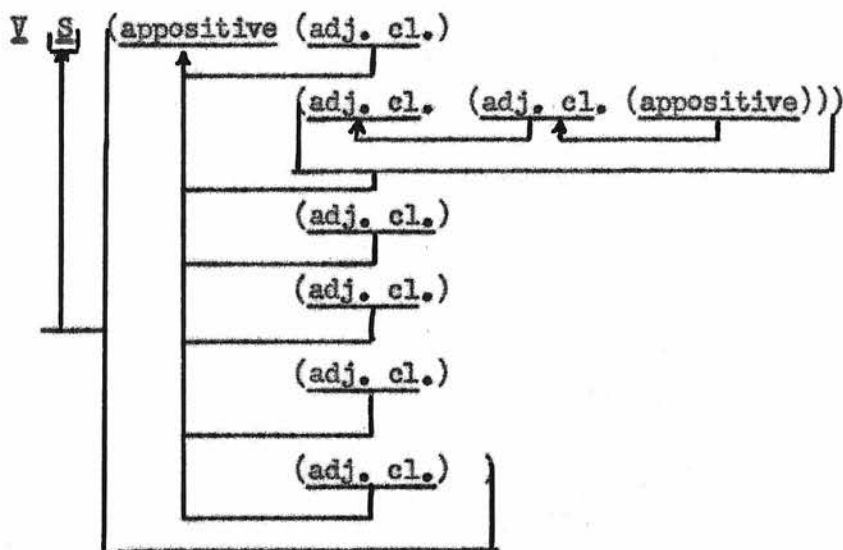


He may also use parallel adjective clauses after the principal clause.

Here too the clauses are asymmetrically parallel in that the final

element has been lengthened: -

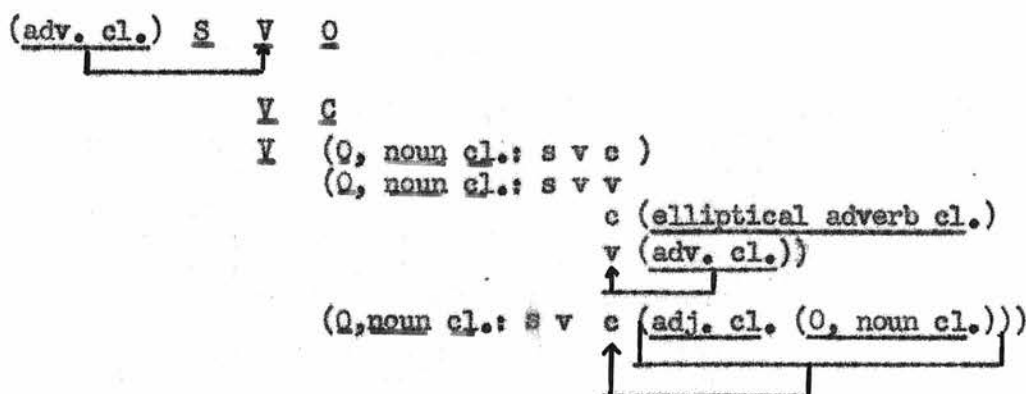
"But here was a gentleman, young like herself, a splendid cavalier, that rode in the cavalry of Spain; that carried the banner of the only potentate whom Peruvians knew of - the King of the Spains and the Indies; that had doubled Cape Horn; that had crossed the Andes; that had suffered shipwreck; that had rocked upon fifty storms, and had wrestled for life through fifty battles."<sup>1</sup>



Variations of this kind of sentence structure are numerous. The following sentence contains an introductory temporal clause, parallel verbs in the principal clause, and a concluding series of clauses and phrases. As in the previous example, the final element in the series is made longer: -

"Perhaps, as her wanderings increased, she thought herself back into childhood; became "pussy" once again; fancied that all since then was a frightful dream; that she was not upon the dreadful Andes but still kneeling in the holy chapel at vespers; still innocent as then; loved as then she had been loved; and that all men were liars who said her hand was ever stained with blood."<sup>2</sup>

1. XIII, p. 211. (The Spanish Military Nun)
2. XIII, p. 204. (The Spanish Military Nun)



In a similar manner, De Quincey may construct an elaborate sentence.

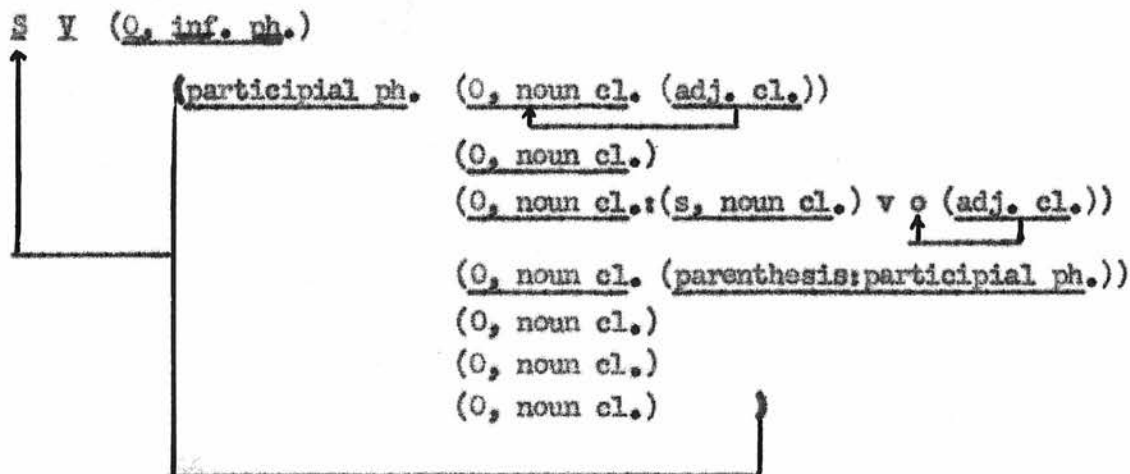
The concluding parallel elements may discuss a variety of aspects of the central thought and contain qualifications and additions.

The next passage quoted shows such an ornate expansion: -

"But some have continued to reject it, not upon any objection to the quality of the knowledge gained, but simply on the ground of its limited extent: contending that in public and political transactions, such as compose the matter of History, human nature exhibits itself upon too narrow a scale and under too monotonous an aspect; that under different names, and in connexion with different dates and regions, events virtually the same are continually revolving; that whatever novelty may strike the ear, in passages of history taken from periods widely remote, affects the names only, and circumstances that are extra-essential; that the passions meantime, the motives, and (allowing for difference of manners) the means even, are subject to no variety; that in ancient or in modern history there is no real accession made to our knowledge of human nature; but that all proceeds by cycles of endless repetition, and in fact that, according to the old complaint, "there is nothing new under the sun."<sup>1</sup>

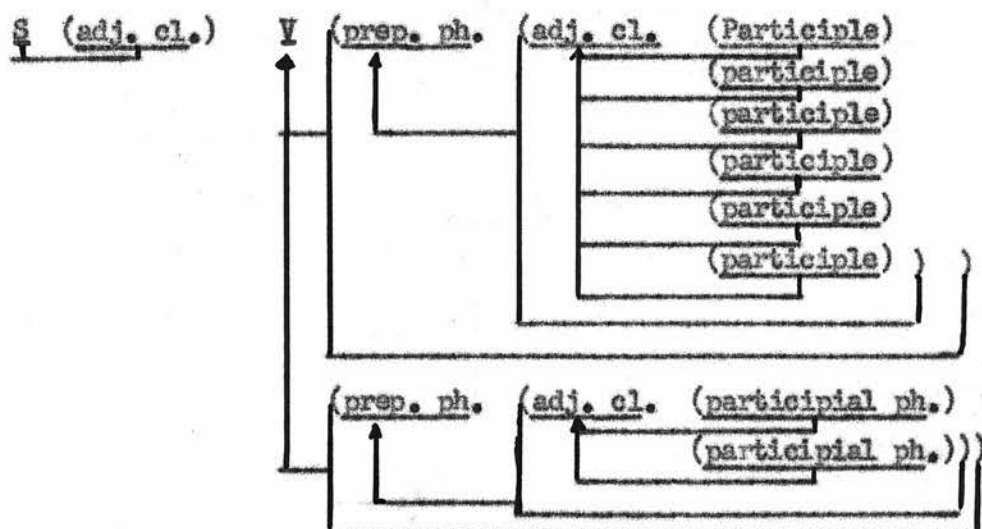
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1. V, p. 356. (Charlemagne)



He may add an adjective clause to the subject as in the next example. It should be noted that the series of parallel elements are intricately and skillfully constructed: -

"The slumber that towered above her brain was like that fluctuating silvery column which stands in scientific tubes, sinking, rising, deepening, lightening, contracting, expanding;<sup>1</sup> or like the mist that sits, through sultry afternoons, upon the river of the American St. Peter, sometimes rarefying for minutes into sunny gauze, sometimes condensing for hours into palls of funeral darkness."<sup>2</sup>

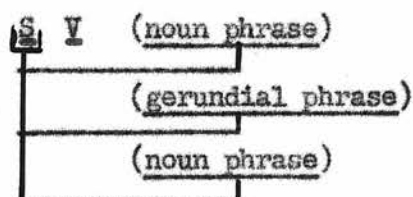


1. In general, De Quincey is fond of using a series of participles for emphasis (cf. page 49), but this series is of special interest for it seems to foreshadow those used in The English Mail Coach almost two years later: "sinking, rising, raving, despairing" (XIII, p. 325). There also they were used in connection with a young woman.
2. XIII, p. 205. (The Spanish Military Nun)



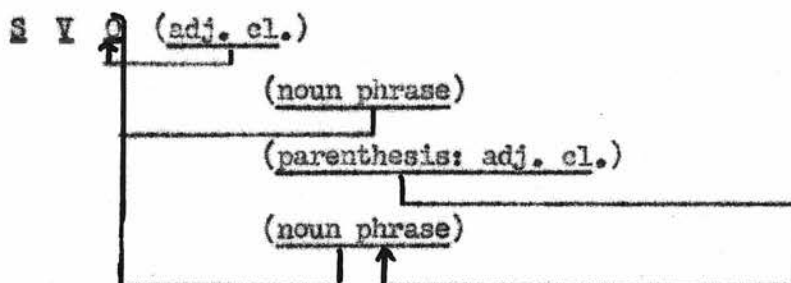
Quite common is an expansion of the concluding subordinate elements in a kind of formal enumeration: -

"Tragical catastrophes arise from neglected crying: ruptures in the first place, a very common result in infants; rolling out of bed, followed by dislocation of the neck; fits and other short cuts to death."<sup>1</sup>



Similarly, De Quincey may make his enumeration specifically formal:<sup>2</sup> -

"Subsequently, I remarked two other features of difference in his manner, neither of which has been overlooked by Mr. Gilfillan: viz., 1st, The unsocial gloom of his eye, travelling over all things with dissatisfaction; 2nd (which in our days seemed unaccountable), the remarkable limitation of his knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

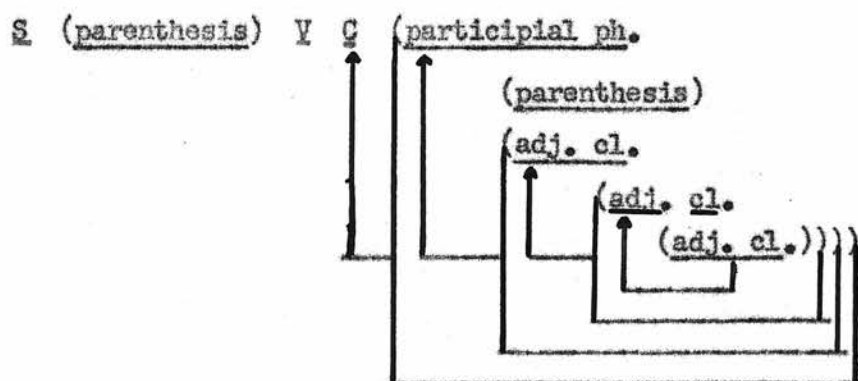


- 
1. XI, p. 307. (On Wordsworth's Poetry)
  2. The use of the abbreviation "viz" in such constructions is one of De Quincey's favourite devices.
  3. XI, p. 337. (Gilfillan's Literary Portraits: Foster)



This kind of sentence is indicative of the associational thinking that is so characteristic of De Quincey. The following sentence shows this pattern of thought in its rather extended group of linked subordinate elements: -

"A most admirable subject for an essay, or a magazine article, as it strikes me, would be a bird's-eye view - or rather a bird's-wing flight - pursuing rapidly the revolutions of that memorable Oracle (for such it really was to the rest of civilized Europe), which, through so long a course of years, like the Delphic Oracle to the nations of old, delivered counsels of civil prudence and of national grandeur that kept alive for Christendom the recollections of freedom, and refreshed to the enslaved Continent the old ideas of Roman patriotism, which, But for our Parliament, would have uttered themselves by no voices on earth."<sup>1</sup>



The loose sentences quoted in the two previous sections have two features in common: (a) A principal clause which states the main thought, and (b) subordinate elements which expand that main thought by additions and qualifications. The general pattern of the subordinate elements may be a parallel arrangement or it may be a linked system of sub-dependence. Parallel subordinations may possess sub-dependent elements, and portions of the linked elements may be set in parallel.

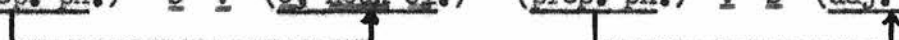
1. X, p. 337. (A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature in its Foremost Pretensions)

Although he uses both symmetric and asymmetric parallelism in such sentences, De Quincey's long passages set in a parallel structure are likely to be asymmetric to avoid the monotony that arises from too much uniformity.

3. De Quincey may place two principal clauses in a parallel arrangement. He makes extensive use of the balanced sentence: -

"Without Caesar we affirm a thousand times that there would have been no perfect Rome; and, but for Rome, there could have been no such man as Caesar."<sup>1</sup>

(prep. ph.) S V (O, noun cl.) (prep. ph.) V S (adj. cl.)



"Habits are the great pledge for the due performance of duties; and habits, to be habits, cannot be supposed applying themselves to variable or contradictory impulses."<sup>2</sup>

S V C S (inf. ph.) V O




The neatness and finish of a sentence that has two main ideas presented in a form that is similar and the rhythm that arises from the construction are responsible for De Quincey's frequent use of balanced sentences. He makes use of a variety of kinds: -

"They wheeled in mazes; I spelled the steps. They telegraphed from afar; I read the signals. They conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness my eye traced the plots. Theirs were the symbols; mine are the words."<sup>3</sup>

first three sentences: S V O S V O  
the last S V C S V C

"Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart; therefore it is that she dotes upon grief."<sup>4</sup>

S V (C, noun cl. (adj. cl.)) S V (C, noun cl.)



- 
1. VI, p. 229. (The Caesars)
  2. IX, p. 373. (Political Parties of Modern England)
  3. XIII, p. 365. (Suspiria de Profundis)
  4. Ibid., p. 364.

"Literature it was that gave the first wound to literature; the hack scribbler it was that first degraded the lofty literary artist."<sup>1</sup>

C S V (noun cl.) C S V (noun cl.)

Sometimes the balanced effect of the sentence is not so clear or so obvious: -

"The two Gordians, who commanded in Africa, were set up by the Senate against the new Emperor; and the consternation of that body must have been great when these champions were immediately overthrown and killed."<sup>2</sup>

S (adj. cl.) V S V (adv. cl.)

"Finding myself, therefore, walking on a solitary path of bad repute, leading whither no man's experience could tell me, I became proportionably cautious; and if nature had any plot for making an example of me, I was resolved to baulk her."<sup>3</sup>

(participial ph. (participial ph. (adv. cl.))) S V C  
(adv. cl. (gerundial ph.)) S V (O, infinitive ph.)

De Quincey may use sentences consisting of two main clauses, balanced or approximately so, in whole passages. The rhythmical rise and fall of the prose is probably the reason for the consecutive sentences following the pattern of balanced sentence: -

"Sometimes I ran perilously close into my perihelion; sometimes I became frightened, and wheeled off into a vast cometary aphelion, where for six months "opium" was a

1. IV, p. 312. (Oliver Goldsmith)
2. VI, p. 380. (The Caesars)
3. III, p. 419. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)



word unknown. How nature stood all these see-sawings is quite a mystery to me; I must have led her a sad life in those days. Nervous irritation forced me, at times, into frightful excesses; but terror from anomalous symptoms sooner or later forced me back."<sup>1</sup>

12/1      V      (adj. cl.)  
V

(S, noun cl.) V C  
S V O

Q Q Q

4. De Quincey may have little or no parallelism in his two principal clauses. He may use the second clause principally to continue or to expand the thought of the first principal clause. In narration, the expansion may consist simply of additional action: -

"The general and his staff entered the palace; and the first act of one officer, on coming into the dining-room, was to advance to the sideboard, sweep all the plate into a basket, and deliver it to the bishop's butler, with a charge to carry it off to a place of security."<sup>2</sup>

S V O                      S C    (C, infinitive ph.)  
                                       (C, infinitive ph.)  
                                       (C, infinitive ph.)

The second principal clause may describe action that arises from the matter in the first: -

"The libeller, however, entrenched himself in his determination to hear of no pistol warfare; and hence,

1. Ibid., p. 418.

2. I, p. 251. (Autobiography)

though two of the Englishmen were of colossal build, and well able to have smashed his pugilistic pretensions, yet, as all but himself were opposed to that mode of fighting, he, in fact, took shelter under his own limited mode of offering satisfaction."<sup>1</sup>

S V O (adv. cl.)(adv. cl.) S V O

In a great many cases, De Quincey uses the first principal clause to state a premise and the second principal clause to develop it or to discuss ideas suggested by it: -

"He whose talk is of oxen will probably dream of oxen; and the condition of human life which yokes so vast a majority to a daily experience incompatible with much elevation of thought oftentimes neutralises the tone of grandeur in the reproductive faculty of dreaming, even for those whose minds are populous with solemn imagery."<sup>2</sup>

S (adj. cl.) V

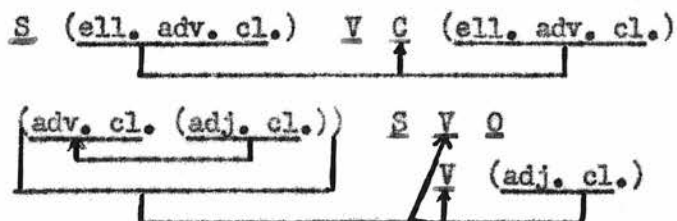
S (adj. cl.) V O (prep. ph. (adj. cl.))

In a similar manner, De Quincey will use the first principal clause to present an emotion and the second principal clause to explain it or to intensify it. The sentence-structure is one that is particularly suited to impassioned prose, for it enables De Quincey to set the stage, as it were, in the first clause and to build up an emotional scene in a longer, more detailed second clause: -

"Some feelings, though not deeper or more passionate, are more tender than others; and often when I walk, at this time, in Oxford by dreamy lamp-light, and hear those airs played on a common street-organ which years ago solaced me and my dear youthful companion, I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically separated us for ever."<sup>3</sup>

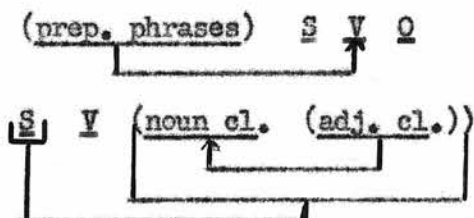
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1. III, p. 153. (London Reminiscences)  
 2. XIII, p. 334. (Suspiria de Profundis)  
 3. III, p. 362. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)



Usually in this kind of sentence the second clause with its qualifying elements is much longer than the first. But sometimes De Quincey will also include a considerable amount of material in his first principal clause without departing very far from the pattern. In such cases, however, the distinctive quality of the short-long construction is lost, and the sentence becomes more conventional: -

"By way of bringing his characteristic merits within the horizon of the least learned readers, I will now lay before them a close analysis of his ablest and most famous performance, the "Phalaris"; and it happens favourably for this purpose, though singularly, that the most learned of Bentley's works is also that which is best fitted for intelligent popular admiration."<sup>1</sup>



5. He may also use the first principal clause and its qualifying elements to present introductory detail or preliminary information and the second principal clause to give a short conclusion or a more emphatic additional point:<sup>2</sup>-

"The circumstances necessary to create an act of mere self-homicide can rarely concur except in a state of disordered society, and during the cardinal revolutions of human history; where, however, they do concur, there it will not be suicide."<sup>3</sup>

1. IV, p. 195. (Richard Bentley)  
 2. These constructions slip very easily into periodicity. Cf. p. 128.  
 3. VIII, p. 399. (On Suicide) 115.

S (inf. ph.) V (adv. cl.) S V C

"Some mode of publication must have existed for Athens; that is evident."<sup>1</sup>

S V S V C

"It is singular, as respects Coleridge, that Mr. Gillman never says one word upon the event of the great Highgate experiment for leaving off laudanum, though Coleridge came to Mr. Gillman's for no other purpose; and in a week, this vast creation of new earth, sea, and all that is in them, was to have been accomplished."<sup>2</sup>

S V C (noun cl. (adv. cl.))

S (adj. cl.) V

In emotional passages, the concluding short clause is used to make more intense the feeling that has been expressed in the longer elements at the beginning of the sentence: -

"And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll, through many months, promised an abiding torment; and, in fact, it never left me, though recurring more or less intermittingly."<sup>3</sup>

V S (adj. cl. (part. ph.))

S V C (part. ph.)

De Quincey makes effective use of the second principal clause to sum

- 
1. X, p. 235. (Style)
  2. V, p. 208. (Coleridge and Opium-Eating)
  3. III, p. 440. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

up in a few well-turned words the general idea of the first principal clause: -

"These things being given, we begin to perceive a life removed by a great gulf from the ordinary human life even of kings and heroes: we descry a life within a life."<sup>1</sup>

(absolute) S      V      (O, inf. ph. (part. ph.))

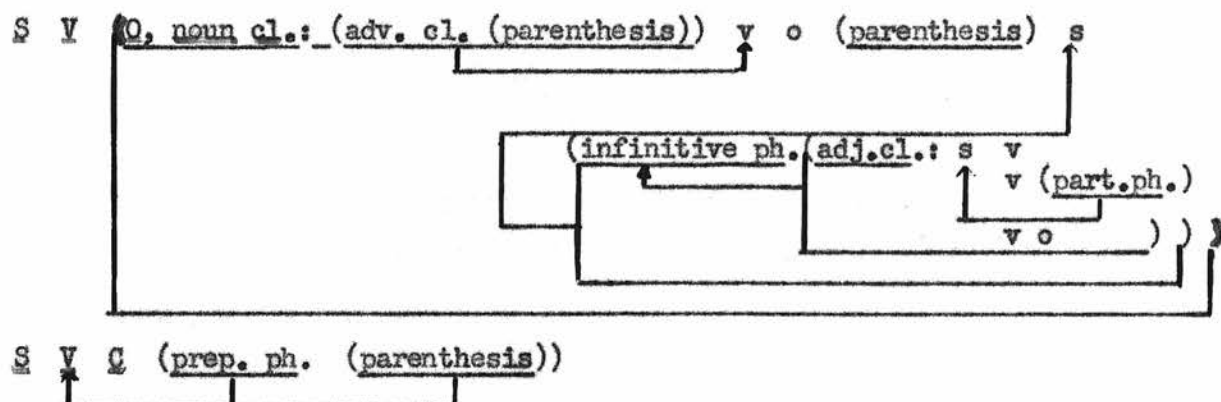
S V O

Sometimes De Quincey's lack of directness and his habit of digression cause him to press too much material into the first principal clause or to make unnecessary additions to the last portion of the sentence. In such sentences, the second principal clause and its qualifying elements may appear to be little more than loosely constructed afterthoughts. The addition of such extraneous material has obscured the structure and weakened the force of the following example: -

"The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby mentions that, when he was meditating a work on some section (I forget what) of Ancient History, there reached him from one of the Napiers (either Sir William, it must have been, or the late General Sir Charles) an admonitory caution to beware of treating Pompey with any harshness or undervaluation under the common notion that he had been spoiled in youth by unmerited success, had been petted by a most ignorant populace through half-a-century, and, finally, coming into collision with the greatest of men, had naturally made a total shipwreck; for that, on the contrary, he was a very great strategist; yes, in spite of Pharsalia (and in spite, I presume, of his previous Italian campaign)."<sup>2</sup>

- 
1. X, p. 347. (Theory of Greek Tragedy)
  2. VI, p. 222. (Cicero: Postscript)





6. Although De Quincey most often uses two principal clauses in parallel, he may place almost any number of principal clauses in a parallel arrangement. He may use a combination of different devices and methods in connection with his parallelism. For example, in the next passage quoted the clauses are parallel syntactically in a group of four (A,B,C,D) which are linked together by the general thought of such words as "martial," "restless," "swords," "fermenting," and "revolutionary." But the clauses are also parallel in two sets of two clauses each (A and B, C and D), the second clause being a specific example of the idea of the first, and the last two clauses being tied together by repetition: -

"The times were still martial and restless; men still wore swords in pacific assemblies; the intellect of the age was a fermenting intellect; it was a revolutionary intellect."<sup>1</sup>

S V C S V Q S V C S V C

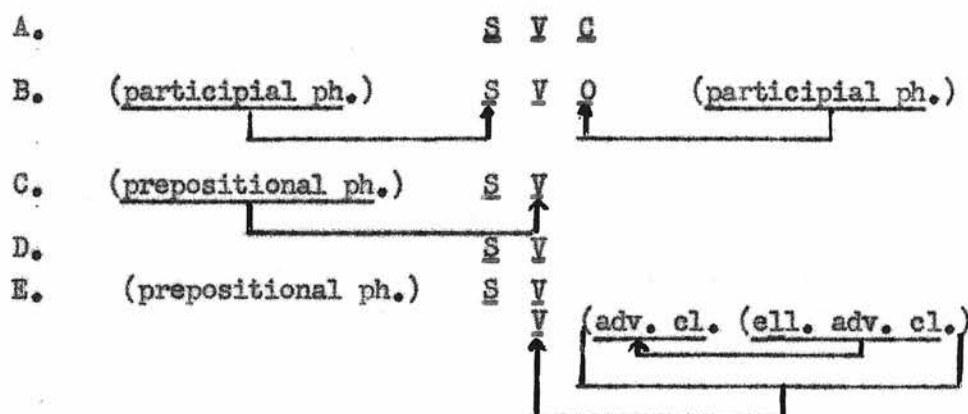
In using a number of principal clauses that are syntactically alike, De Quincey frequently lengthens the last element to make a rather graceful conclusion, an asymmetric device I have already indicated in his use of subordinate clauses.<sup>2</sup> The next example shows also a

1. X, pl 343. (Theory of Greek Tragedy)

2. p. 135.

combination of elements set in parallel structure: -

"Suddenly her countenance grew dim; and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapours rolling between us; in a moment all had vanished; thick darkness came on; and in the twinkling of an eye I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in London, walking again with Ann - just as we had walked, when both children, eighteen years before, along the endless terraces of Oxford Street."<sup>1</sup>



In the sentences above, De Quincey has placed a number of different elements parallel to each other within the larger framework of five similar clauses: (1) clauses A, C, and D, (2) clauses B and E, and (3) the introductory prepositional phrases in clauses C and E. The clauses are also linked together by the repetition of "I," "mountains," and two forms of "walk." The parallel structure is used as effectively in this sentence in which the thought moves in a chronological order, as it is in the previous example in which the thought moves in a logical order.

In making the concluding elements too long, De Quincey sometimes weakens the sentence by the all-too-frequent unnecessary addition.

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1. III, pp. 445-446. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

The effectiveness of the concluding part of the following sentence is doubtful: -

"In 1794 war had begun to rage; the revolutionary frenzy had produced its bloodiest excesses; the gloom had terrifically deepened; and the French reign of terror, by a very natural reaction on all the rest of Europe, produced a corresponding system of vigilance and coercion in all regular governments, which must now be admitted to have been too harsh and despotic, if viewed apart from the extremities of the occasion."<sup>1</sup>

S V (O, infinitive ph.)

S V O

S V  
S (prepositional ph.) V O (adj. cl. (adv. cl.))

7. Another kind of sentence is also used frequently by De Quincey. It consists of an introductory principal clause which states a premise, one or more transitional principal clauses which give additional points, and a final principal clause that makes a definite conclusion. The sentence thus constructed has a well-marked beginning, middle, and end: -

"Republican Rome had her prerogative Tribe; the Earth has its prerogative City; and that City was Rome."<sup>2</sup>

S V O

S V O

S V C

"Coleridge, the only person known to the public as having dallied systematically and for many years with opium, could not be looked to for any candid report of its history and progress; besides that, Coleridge was under a permanent

- 
1. V, p. 121. (Dr. Samuel Parr)
  2. VI, p. 226. (The Caesars)

craze of having nearly accomplished his own liberation from opium; and thus he had come to have an extra reason for self-delusion." <sup>1</sup>

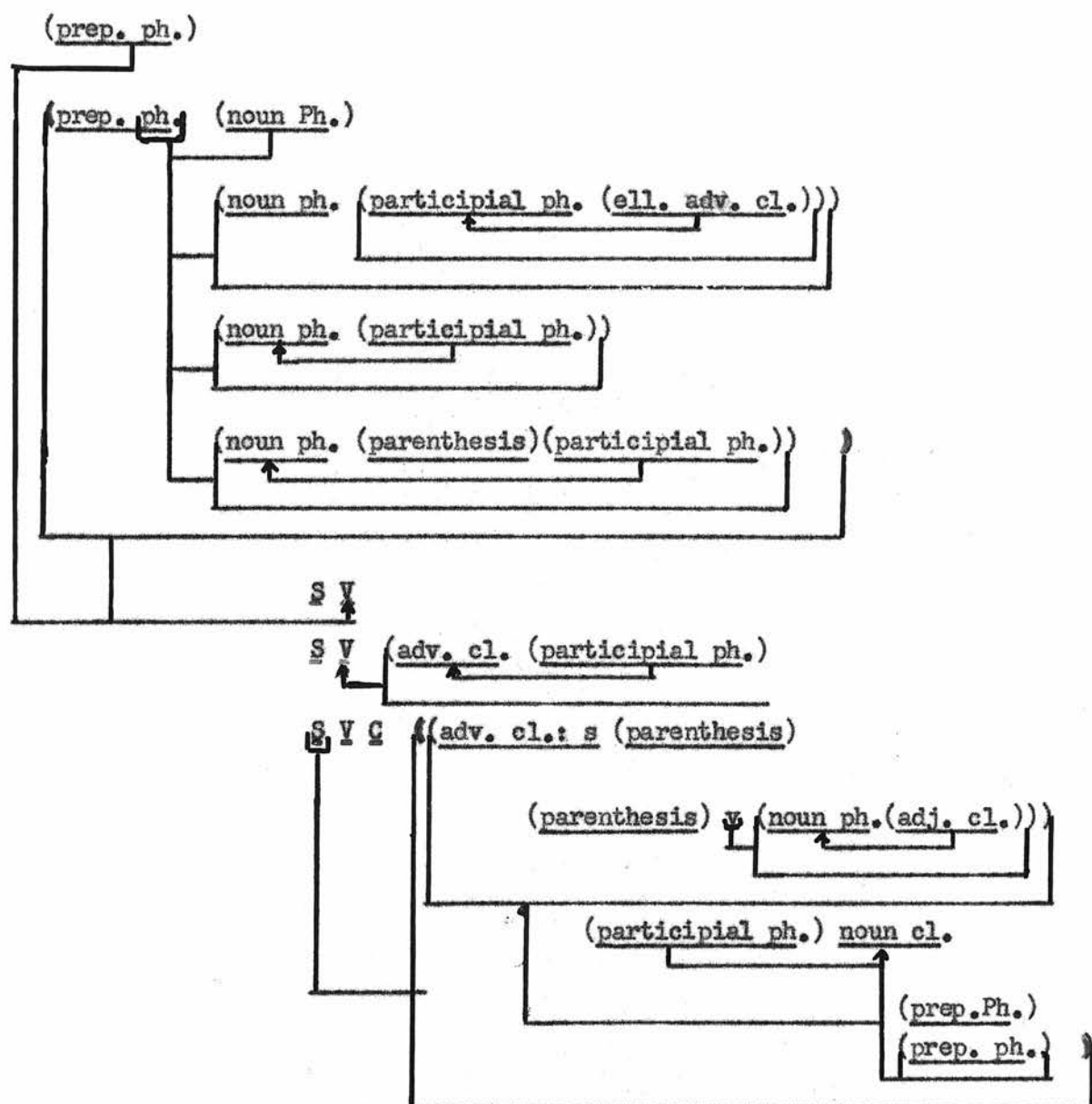
S (appositive) V (prep. ph.)  
 S V (prep. ph.)

S- V (S, inf. ph.)

De Quincey may make elaborate expansions of this kind of sentence. For example, in the next quoted passage, he includes a complicated array of introductory matter holding up the thought before the first principal clause, uses the second principal clause to deepen the idea of the first, and adds an intricate arrangement of qualifying elements to a long concluding principal clause. He also includes suspensions and parentheses. But, in spite of the additions, the sentence still follows the basic pattern of those on the previous page, and should be considered an elaboration or an expansion: -

"Already, what by the procession through fifty years of mighty revolutions amongst the kingdoms of the earth, what by the continual development of vast physical agencies, - steam in all its applications, light getting under harness as a slave for man, powers from heaven descending upon education and accelerations of the press, powers from hell ( as it might seem, but these also celestial) coming round upon artillery and the forces of destruction, - the eye of the calmest observer is troubled; the brain is haunted as if by some jealousy of ghostly beings moving amongst us; and it becomes too evident that, unless this colossal pace of advance can be retarded ( a thing not to be expected), or, which is happily more probable, can be met by counter-forces of corresponding magnitude, - forces in the direction of religion or profound philosophy that shall radiate centrifugally against this storm of life so perilously centripetal towards the vortex of the merely human, - left to itself, the natural tendency of so chaotic a tumult must be to evil; for some minds to lunacy, for others a reagency of fleshly torpor." <sup>2</sup>

1. III, p. 419. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)  
 2. XIII, p. 334. (Suspiria de Profundis)





8. The use of an introductory principal clause to present a thought which is explained more specifically by the following principal clauses is a common device of De Quincey's. This technique corresponds to his practice of explaining the thought of a single principal clause by a series of parallel subordinate elements or by another principal clause and its subordinate elements. The difference is that, as the additional explanatory clauses are principal clauses, they can be placed syntactically parallel with the first principal clause. A sentence constructed thus possesses a force and a dignity that is lacking when the explanatory elements are relegated to a subordinate position. It is probably to create this impression of dignity that De Quincey casts the following sentence in this form: -

"One memorial of my former condition nevertheless remains: my dreams are not calm; the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided; the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not departed; my sleep is still tumultuous; and like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still ( in the tremendous line of Milton) -

"With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms." 1

S V

S V C

S V

S (adj. cl.) V

↑

S V C

(prep. ph. (part. ph.)) S V (prep. ph.)

↑

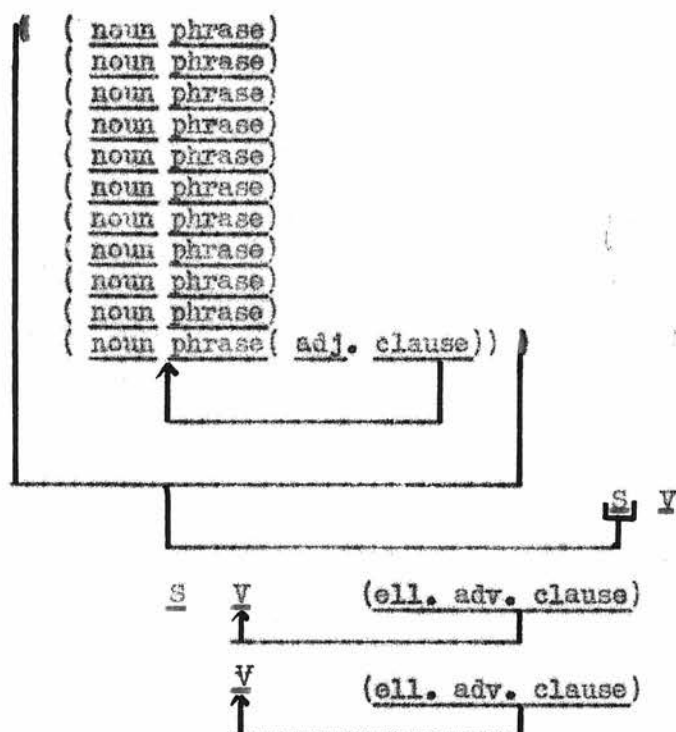
1. III, pp. 448-449. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

9. In some of his long sentences, De Quincey uses a mixture of devices. For example, he may open a sentence with a series of introductory clauses and phrases holding up the thought and follow with a principal clause that completes it. Had he stopped at that point, he would have constructed an effective periodic sentence. But he may add more clauses and explanatory or qualifying material and thus build an elaborate structure that is either a periodic sentence with a long loose tail or a loose sentence with an elaborate introduction. Two examples will show what I mean. The first example is, in reality, an extended periodic sentence. It opens with extrapositional elements and ends with a loosely added conclusion: -

"The elopement from St. Sebastian's, the doubling of Cape Horn, the shipwreck on the coast of Peru, the rescue of the royal banner from the Indians of Chili, the fatal duel in the dark, the astonishing passage of the Andes, the tragical scenes at Tucuman and Cuzco, the return to Spain in obedience to a royal and papal summons, the visit to Rome and the interview with the Pope; finally, the return to South America, and the mysterious disappearance at Vera Cruz, upon which no light was ever thrown, - all these capital heads of the narrative have been established beyond the reach of scepticism; and, in consequence, the story was soon after adopted as historically established, and was reported in Spain and Germany, and by a Parisian journal so cautious and so distinguished for its ability as the Revue des Deux Mondes."<sup>1</sup>

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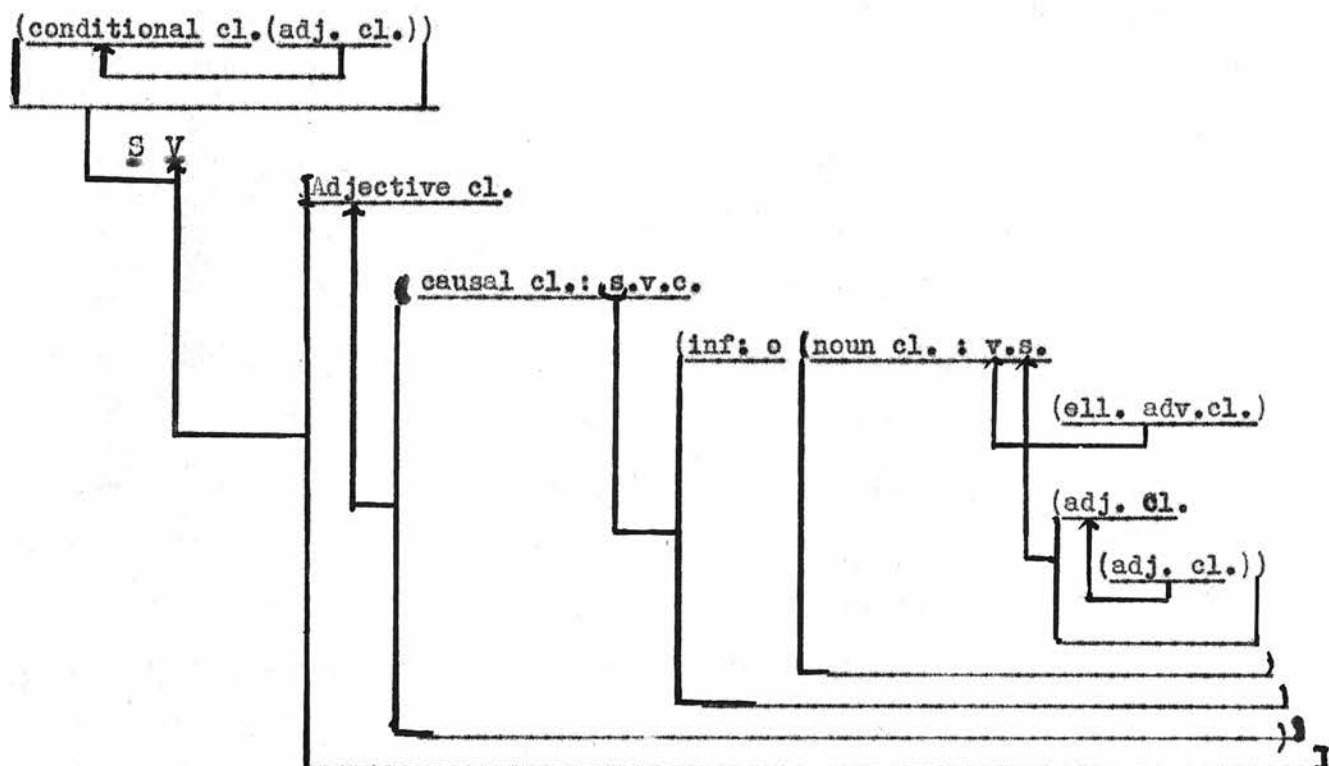
1. XIII, p. 240. (The Spanish Military Run)



The following example is a loose sentence that has an elaborate introduction holding up the thought. Had De Quincey stopped with "award," the sentence would be effectively periodic: -

"Suppose the case, therefore, that Kate's Memoirs had been thrown upon the world with no vouchers for their authenticity beyond such internal presumptions as would have occurred to thoughtful readers when reviewing the entire succession of incidents, I am of opinion that the person best qualified by legal experience to judge of evidence would finally have pronounced a favourable award; since it is easy to understand that in a world so vast as the Peru, the Mexico, the Chili of Spaniards during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and under the slender modification of Indian manners as yet effected by the Papal Christianization of these countries, and in the neighbourhood of a river-system so awful, of a mountain-system so unheard-of in Europe, there would probably, by blind, unconscious sympathy, grown up a tendency to lawless and gigantesque ideals of adventurous life, under which, united with the duelling code of Europe, many things would become trivial and commonplace experiences that to us home-bred English ( "qui musas colimus severiores") seem monstrous and revolting." 1

1. XIII, p. 240. (The Spanish Military Nun)



In spite of the mass of introductory material, a lengthy conditional clause introduced by the conjunctive "suppose," the construction is a loose sentence. The involved "telescoping" of one element within another in the last part of the sentence shows the characteristic De Quincey elaborateness, for the concluding causal clause contains an infinitive having as its object a noun clause that includes an involved group of comparisons.

Although many of De Quincey's sentences are long, involved, and elaborate, the thought is almost always followed easily. One of the methods that De Quincey uses to insure that the reader

will follow him on even the most labyrinthine wanderings is to be certain that the connections between the various parts of his writings are clear. Since De Quincey's use of transitional elements constitutes an important characteristic of his style, it is with that feature that the next section of this analysis is concerned.



## Chapter Three

### Stylistic Mannerisms

## I

Transitional Elements

De Quincey's usage in respect of transitional elements is one of the distinctive features of his style. He is perhaps over-careful to make clear the connections between the parts of his sentences, between the sentences themselves, and between the larger sections of his writing. He is so aware of the importance of transitional elements that his elaboration of them can be considered a mannerism.

The ornate connections in his works are in keeping with his thinking, for De Quincey has the kind of mental processes that runs to transitions. He is acutely conscious of relationships and qualifications. His interests lie in exactly those things: the subtle connections, the nice distinctions, the detailed analyses of ideas. The obvious and prosaic approach interests him slightly, if at all. The elaborate weaving of an intricate pattern of thought and the devious handling of a subject are much more to his liking than a direct straightforward presentation of ideas. His interests in the subtle and the indirect lead him to be concerned with those parts of his prose that hold together otherwise separated ideas. It is significant that he himself points out the importance of connections: -

"The two capital secrets in the art of prose composition are these: first, the philosophy of transition and connection, or the art by which one step in an evolution of thought is made

to rise out of another: all fluent and effective composition depends on the connections; secondly, the way in which sentences are made to modify each other; for the most powerful effects in written eloquence arise out of this reverberation, as it were, from each other in rapid succession of sentences; and, because some limitation is necessary to the length and complexity of sentences, in order to make this interdependency felt: hence it is that the Germans have no eloquence."<sup>1</sup>

He says much the same thing in a slightly different way in another essay: -

"A sentence, even when insulated and viewed apart for itself, is a subject for complex art: even so far it is capable of multiform beauty, and liable to a whole nosology of malconformations. But it is the relation of sentences, in what Horace terms their "junctura" that the true life of composition resides. The mode of their nexus, the way in which one sentence is made to arise out of another, and to prepare the opening for a third: this is the great loom in which the textile process of the moving intellect reveals itself and prospers. Here the separate clauses of a period become architectural parts, aiding, relieving, supporting each other."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to his interest in subtle relationships, other features in De Quincey's personality would help to explain his concern over the transitional elements. We know that he was vague in his personal life and that he always had difficulty in following any sort of plan.<sup>3</sup> We also know that he lacked systematic organization in his writings and that in those long years that he wrote for the periodicals he was so dilatory that he had a great deal of trouble meeting publisher's deadlines.<sup>4</sup> These factors would partly account for

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1. II, p. 65. (Autobiography)

2. X, Pp. 258-259. (Language)

3 & 4. Perhaps most of these points are generally accepted. But see Eaton, op.cit., esp. pp. 348-356, 510-518; Sackville West, op. cit., pp. 239-267, 298-337; Japp, op. cit., pp. 338-358. Other biographers are also in general agreement on these points. See also W. H. Bonner. De Quincey at Work. Buffalo: 1936, passim. De Quincey himself complains at various times of the pressure of the periodical press, notably I, p. 6, V, pp. 305-306, and X, pp. 149-150. In addition to these works, the correspondence between De Quincey and his publishers shows his difficulties. Cf. letters between De Quincey and the Blackwoods (National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine, MSS), between De Quincey and Tait (National Library of Scotland, MS folio 1670), and between De Quincey and Hessey (British Museum MSS, add. 37, 215.) Although some of this correspondence has been quoted by various writers, a great deal of it is still unpublished.

De Quincey's wish to make precise his transitions. Writing at the last minute with only a loose over-all plan in mind, and faced with the difficulty of keeping together the multifarious ideas that were suggested to him by almost any subject, De Quincey wanted to be sure that the connection of one idea to another was made clear, even though the work as a whole might lack organization. It was his method of being certain that a thread of continuity was kept in an article, no matter how far he might wander from the subject of the opening passage.

The revisions that De Quincey made in the manuscripts discussed on pages 16-20 of this thesis shed some light on this aspect of his style,<sup>1</sup> for changes in transitional elements are among the most numerous. De Quincey, in going back over his work, did not have the time, or perhaps felt it unnecessary, to make many changes in overall organization of his material. He did, however, wish to make sure that the reader could follow the thought as it passed from one idea to another. He adds phrases such as "on the one hand," "for, as I have said,"<sup>2</sup> "let it be remembered,"<sup>3</sup>

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1. The National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's MSS:-  
The Revolution of Greece, Parts Two and Three.  
Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life,  
To the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine  
The Murder of William Coenen.  
J. Pierpont Morgan Library, De Quincey MSS:-  
On the London Magazine  
Review of Mr. Ferrier's Paper.
  2. The Revolution of Greece, op. cit.
  3. The Murder of William Coenen, op. cit.

and others of like nature designed to make the connections quite clear. Sometimes he adds longer transitional elements. One passage originally read: -

"Understand I speak advisedly and circumspectly: I am far from thinking myself prepared to enter into all the questions which arise from American pretensions."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey revised the passage to read: -

"Understand I speak advisedly and circumspectly; And as the bare name of American teems with suggestions connected with the present subject suffer me to digress for a few moments on this topic. I am far from thinking myself prepared to enter into all the questions which arise from American pretensions."

He made some transitional elements stronger. "It may be pertinent" is revised to read "It may be more in the way of my argument."<sup>2</sup>

The process of revising transitional elements to make the connecting links clear is most apparent in the manuscript of The Greek Revolution, Parts II and III. This is understandable, for the manuscript itself and the letters to Blackwood concerning it show that De Quincey was badly pressed for time when he originally wrote the article.<sup>3</sup> His revisions in the manuscript consist mostly of tidying up various points and adding transitional elements so that the readers of Blackwood's Magazine would have no difficulty in following the thought.

Yet with De Quincey the process of making more elaborate the transitional elements was likely to be a never-ending one. His original manuscripts contain subtle, involved, digressive, and

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1. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS, Reform as affecting the Habits of Private Life.
  2. Ibid.
  3. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's MSS. De Quincey's letters to Blackwood, February and March, 1833.



carefully-connected material. As he revised, he added more subtle, involved, and digressive material and took yet more pains to make his transition precise. Further revisions would usually become even more subtle, involved, digressive, and transitional, until the pressure of the publisher forced De Quincey to give up his manuscript. Deviousness, subtlety, and dilatoriness are a mixture that does not make for completeness, and De Quincey's revisions were usually never finished.

It is not then surprising that De Quincey's transitional elements are elaborate and full. Indeed, it might be said that no page of his writings can be opened without the reader being aware of the "explicitness of connection."<sup>1</sup> Words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs are all used, at one time or another, as means of connection. Although such a variety makes classification rather difficult, De Quincey's transitional elements can be placed under three general headings: - (1) those which in themselves are obviously connective: "and," "but," "hence," "therefore," "at last," "in this case," "thus," "viz," "at any rate," and others of a similar nature; (2) those which anticipate that which is to follow:<sup>2</sup> "and, therefore, I will lay down a picture of happiness," "next, however, comes a fiction so maniacally gross, so incoherent, and so rife....," even below those

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1. Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

2. See John J. Schlicher. Prospective Sentences, University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature, No. 18, p. 99. De Quincey is one of the heaviest users of "prospective sentences": sentences that anticipate that which is to follow.

deeps there opens another deep"; and (3) those which refer back to previous elements: "here, reader, pause and look back upon the separate reticulations, so as if possible to connect them in this huge network of hideous extravagance," "such, amidst the sacred security and inviolability of the office, was the hazardous tenure of the individual." De Quincey may, of course, use any combination of these transitional devices.

It can be seen that De Quincey's methods of securing transition are not in themselves, separately considered, at all unusual.<sup>1</sup> He uses the devices common to most writers of English prose. The distinctive quality in De Quincey's transitional elements lies in the great number that are used and the elaborate care with which they are constructed.

The first sentence quoted on page 159 might be used to illustrate the way in which De Quincey connects the various parts of his sentences. The transitional elements are fairly numerous: "first," "secondly," "or," "for," "and," "because," "hence," "in order to." But the sentence is held together also by the method of listing, "the two capital secrets .... are these," which anticipates the rest of the sentence; and by the repetition<sup>2</sup> of various words: "connection" is repeated and italicized; "composition" and "sentences" are repeated, each time in a slightly different context. Although the sentence is a fairly long one, the thought moves quite easily from idea to idea. This same continuity or thought-flow is found in the sentences quoted in connection with sentence unity

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1. Bain. op., cit., Pt. I, pp. 94-104, points out more specific transitional devices.

2. cf. repetition for emphasis in Chapter I.

on pages 188-189 . There it will be seen that, although the sentence on page 188 lacks unity and the sentences on pages 188-9 are effectively unified, the transitional elements in all three sentences are handled with almost an equal amount of skill.

De Quincey uses this same careful process in connecting sentences together. Not only by the use of transitional words but also by anticipating what is to come and referring back to what has already been presented, he keeps the sentences linked. The following passage shows the process at work: -

"The idea involved in what we call manners is a very complex one; and in some of its elements, as we may have occasion to show farther on, it represents qualities of character (or also of temperament) that are perfectly neutral as regards the social expression of manners. This social expression, which is the chief thing that men think of when describing manners as good or bad, lies in two capital features: first of all, in respect for others; secondly, in self-respect. Now the English fail too often in the first, the French in the second. There is the balance. The French have reason to take us as models in all which regards the second; we them as regards the first. The term "respect for others" may seem too strong for the case. Respect, in its graver expressions, may have no opening for itself in casual intercourse with strangers....."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey takes equal pains to connect his paragraphs. He uses quite often the technique of "end-linking": that is, the first sentence of one paragraph is directly concerned with the last sentence of the previous paragraph. A favorite device is to use the rhetorical question as a means of transition. To illustrate these points and his general practice in connecting paragraphs, I have included here portions of a number of consecutive paragraphs taken from Lord Carlisle on Pope. Since my concern is with those elements that

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1. XIV, p. 328. (French and English Manners)

link the paragraphs, I have omitted most of the body of each: -

"Precisely at this point starts off what I presume to think the great error of Lord Carlisle. He postulates, as if it were a mere gift of inevitable instinct, what too certainly is the....gift of training...Apparently the error is two-fold,; first, an oversight...but, secondly, a positive misconception of a broad character. The Oversight is probably his own...; but the misconception I suspect he owes to another.

First, concerning the first. It is evidently assumed that....mechanic artists...are capable of appreciating Pope. I deny it; and in this I offer them no affront... they can both understand and enjoy a far greater poet, but Pope... is too narrow, local, and casual...besides Pope, for the sake of some momentary and farical effect, deliberately assumes the licence of a liar...But notwithstanding, suppose the working-man might at length be converted to Pope....You have quelled a natural resistance, but clearly with so much loss of power to all parties as was spent on the resistance; and with what final gain to any party?

The answer to this lies in the second of the errors which I have imputed to Lord Carlisle. The first error was perhaps no more than an undervaluation of the truth. The second... rest on a total misconception, viz. the attribution to Pope of some special authority as a moral teacher...This prejudice (was)... first planted by Lord Byron....But Pope is not in any deep or sincere sense a moral thinker; and in his own heart there was a misgiving, not to be silenced, that he was not.

Yet this is strange. Surely Lord Carlisle...might have credit given him for power to form a right judgment on such a question as that...But he probably he never had any motive... and until a man has a sincere interest in such a question, and sets himself diligently to examine and collate the facts, he will pretty certainly have no right to give any verdict on the case.

What made Lord Byron undertake the patronage of Pope? It was, as usually happened with him, a motive of hostility to some contemporaries. He wished to write up Pope by way of writing down others...Having mentioned the poets, he compares them with the moralists....It is pretty clear that....a moralist must begin by becoming a poet...The order of precedency, therefore, between poets and moralists as laid down by Byron is very soon inverted by a slight effort of reflection.

But, without exacting from a man so self-willed as Lord Byron (and at that moment in a great passion) any philosophic rigour, it may be worth while, so far as the case concerns Pope, to ponder for one moment upon this invidious comparison, and to expose the fallacy which it conceals. By the term moralist we indicate two kinds of thinkers...a clerical moralist...and a.....Grecian moralist."<sup>1</sup>

Here are portions of six paragraphs (condensed with some inevitable injury to De Quincey's thought and style). In each of them, De Quincey

has made carefully constructed transitions. He has accomplished this by the use of sentences at the beginning and the end of each paragraph and by the run of the thought itself.

In much the same way, De Quincey uses whole paragraphs to connect larger portions of his works. The following paragraph, for example, adds nothing substantial, but merely refers back to the previous section (a consideration of German prose style) and indicates what will be discussed next (the faults of English prose style): -

"We might have made our readers merry with the picture of German prose; but we must not linger. It is enough to say that it offers the counterpole to the French style. Our own popular style, and (what is worse) the tendency of our own, is to the German extreme. To those who read German, indeed, German prose, as written by the mob of authors, presents, as offensive faults of our own."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey often connects his digressions to the rest of his article: -

"Here I pause for one moment to exhort the reader never to pay any attention to his understanding when it stands in opposition to any other faculty of his mind."<sup>2</sup>

After a page of discussion, he returns to the subject by saying: -

"But to return from this digression. My understanding could furnish no reason why the knocking at the gate in Macbeth should produce any effect, direct or reflected."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, although De Quincey's elaboration or fullness of transition has the virtue of enabling the reader to follow him even on his most rambling excursions, it is apparent that, in some cases, De Quincey takes undue pains with his connecting links. He is so careful, so much concerned with the elaborate construction of links as to appear

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1. X, pp. 160-161. (Style)  
2. X, p. 389. (On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth)  
3. Ibid, p. 390. Cf. the revision made on page 161 (National Lib. MS On Reform) It is also a connection made to introduce a digression.



somewhat pedantic in his effort to make the transition from one part to another. An example might be pointed out on page 165, the long sentence introducing the last paragraph taken from Lord Carlisle on Pope. De Quincey has been discussing a statement of Byron's concerning moralists and poets and has remarked that Byron's "order of precedency...is very soon inverted by a slight reflection." De Quincey's own consideration of the various kinds of moralists could then have been easily developed without being introduced by a somewhat lengthy transitional sentence. Not so, however; De Quincey insists on making the connection clear. In such cases, the connection defeats its own purpose. Instead of forwarding the discussion by carrying the thought over to the next sentence, it slows it down by the unnecessary addition of an otiose sentence. De Quincey has made the transition so clear and so apparent as to impede the progress instead of aiding it. This over-elaboration of transition is perhaps most obvious in De Quincey's works of narration. For example, in The Revolt of the Tartars, after Zebek's inflammatory speech inciting the Tartars to action, De Quincey begins the next paragraph as follows: -

"Having thus sufficiently aroused the angry passions of his vast audience, and having alarmed their fears by this pretended scheme against their first-born (an artifice which was indispensable to his purpose, because it met beforehand every form of amendment to his proposal coming from the more moderate noble, who would not otherwise have failed to insist upon trying the effect of bold addresses to the Empress before resorting to any desperate extremity), Zebek-Dorchi opened his scheme of revolt, and, if so, of instant revolt; since any preparations reported at St. Petersburg would be a signal for the armies of Russia to cross into such positions from all parts of Asia as would effectually intercept their march."<sup>1</sup>

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1. VII, p. 385. (The Revolt of the Tartars)

This long and involved sentence, carefully summarizing the main ideas of the previous paragraph and adding qualifications is an impediment at a point where a narrative of action is to be expected. It is the use of such elaborate connections at inappropriate places in his writings that renders some of De Quincey's transitional elements ineffective.

Inversion

Inversions appear so frequently in De Quincey's writings that his use of them must also be considered a mannerism. He usually departs from the normal order<sup>1</sup> of the elements in a sentence for the sake of emphasis, although he may use inversion for the purpose of transition or to make a passage more rhythmical.

De Quincey uses a variety of inversions. His practice shows frequently a common enough reversal of the order of the subject-verb-complement: -

"Wonderful is the effect upon soldiers of such enduring and separate remembrance."<sup>2</sup>

"Fishy were his eyes; torpedinous was his manner..."<sup>3</sup>

"Trivial, meantime, as regarded any permanent consequences, would have been this casual inroad upon my patrimony."<sup>4</sup>

In a sentence containing an intransitive verb, he may invert the verb and its qualifying elements: -

"Precisely in this year commenced the Grecian Revolution."<sup>5</sup>

1. I have taken the normal order of words (or phrases and clauses used as single words) in a sentence to be subject-verb-object, or complement, with subordinate elements being placed near the word or words to which they refer. Introductory adverbial clauses and verbid phrases, if their reference is clear, I have not considered to be inverted. Cf. Bain, op. cit., Pt. I, pp. 1-18; Herbert J. C. Grierson, Rhetoric and English Composition. Edinburgh: n.d. pp. 93-114; H. W. and F. G. Fowler, The King's English, (third ed.) Oxford: 1936, pp. 189-203; and A Dictionary of Modern English Usage. op. cit., pp. 285-292; Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, The Reader over your Shoulder. London: 1943, pp. 171-174, esp. p. 174.
2. VI, pp. 317-318. (The Caesars)
3. V, p. 196. (Coleridge and Opium-Eating)
4. III, p. 320. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
5. VII, p. 293. (The Greek Revolution)

This pattern of modifiers-verb-subject is used frequently by De Quincey. The modifying elements may be of varying length: -

"Obliquely to the left lay the many-languaged town of Liverpool; obliquely to the right, the multitudinous sea."<sup>1</sup>

"Oftentimes, in the very praises given to any object, whether thing or person, is involved virtually a dispraise."<sup>2</sup>

"Upon me, as upon others scattered thinly by tens and twenties over every thousand years, fell too powerfully and too early the vision of life."<sup>3</sup>

De Quincey also follows a common practice in inverting adjective-noun combinations. He does not place an adjective clause out of order very often, although he may shift the position of single adjectives and adjectival phrases, especially participial ones: -

"truth celestial mixed with human falsehoods..."<sup>4</sup>

"...she is an engaging child, - loving, natural and wild..."<sup>5</sup>

"It is a Bible exquisitely illuminated...."<sup>6</sup>

"This letter is a beautiful record, wisely and pathetically composed."<sup>7</sup>

"...with arching foot, with eyes upraised..."<sup>8</sup>

"fragment of music too passionate...."<sup>9</sup>

But De Quincey is apt to move almost any element from its normal position in the sentence. Almost always, he will shift the element towards the beginning of the sentence. Sometimes this change is made to create a special effect as in the following passage in which the inversion emphasises movement: -

"Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight."<sup>10</sup>

1. III, p. 395.
2. XIV, p. 305.
3. XIII, p. 350.
4. Ibid, p. 349.
5. Ibid, p. 358.
6. Ibid, p. 255
7. Ibid.

(The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)  
(Memorial Chronology)  
(Suspiria de Profundis)

8. XIII, p. 318. (Dream Fugue)
9. Ibid, p. 319.
10. XIII, p. 316. (Dream Fugue)

In some cases it is the combination of a desire for emphasis and a need for connection that motivates the inverson: -

"On this consideration, these great men acted."<sup>1</sup>

"Of all public men that stand confessedly in the first rank as to splendour of intellect, Burke was the least popular at the time when our blind friend Schlosser assumes him to have run off with the lion's share of popularity."<sup>2</sup>

Very often De Quincey places single adverbs at the beginning of a sentence. Here, once more, the inversion may be used not only for emphasis but also for connection: -

"Slowly the pinnace nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows."<sup>3</sup>

"Eventually, but after what lapse of time nobody ever knew, she was saved from death by a farmer..."<sup>4</sup>

De Quincey is especially apt to use the adverb "suddenly" in this manner. The word used thus appears in a variety of passages: -

"Suddenly a great convulsion involves all in one common ruin, this man only excepted."<sup>5</sup>

"Suddenly, however, a dull sound arose within a quarter of a mile from the city gate."<sup>6</sup>

"Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound...."<sup>7</sup>

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1. VII, p. 133. (The Essenes) "link inversion" Fowler. Modern English Usage, op. cit., p. 286.
  2. XI, p. 40. (Schlosser's Literary History) "signpost inversion", Fowler, Ibid.
  3. XIII, p. 319. (Dream Fugue)
  4. XIII, p. 347. (Suspiria de Profundis)
  5. VII, p. 122. (The Essenes)
  6. XII, p. 56. (Klosterheim)
  7. XIII, p. 319. (Dream Fugue)



One of the most common kinds of inversion used by De Quincey is the placing out of order the object of a verbid or of a finite verb: -

"Feelings such as these I had the courage to express; a personal compliment or so, I might now and then hear."<sup>1</sup>

"One painful fact I will state, in taking leave of this subject...."<sup>2</sup>

"What they showed us, that, in commercial phrase, we carried to their account; what they gave, for that, we credited them."<sup>3</sup>

"Him now - this Parr - there was no conceivable motive for enduring...."<sup>4</sup>

Especially does he place the complement out of order in impersonal constructions: -

"Wordsworth it was, then living at Allan Bank in Grasmere, who had introduced me to John Wilson."<sup>5</sup>

"For, by accident, I it was that spoke first..."<sup>6</sup>

"Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household..."<sup>7</sup>

"True it was that they had yet reached only the half-way house."<sup>8</sup>

In the next example, it is difficult to say whether De Quincey inverted the object of the sentence to emphasize it by placing it at the beginning, or if he had in mind the rhythm of the passage: -

"Domicile he had not round whose hearth his affections might gather; rest he had not for the sole of his burning foot."<sup>9</sup>

De Quincey may also invert part of the verb itself. Although this kind of inversion is found in various places throughout his works,

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|----|---------------|---|
| 1. | II, p. 135.   | (Literary Reminiscences)                    |
| 2. | I, p. 247.    | (First Irish Rebellion)                     |
| 3. | XIV, p. 352.  | (The Chinese Question in 1857)              |
| 4. | II, p. 208.   | (Literary Reminiscences)                    |
| 5. | V, p. 308.    | (Sir William Hamilton)                      |
| 6. | III, p. 307.  | (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater) |
| 7. | XIII, p. 365. | (Suspiria de Profundis)                     |
| 8. | VII, p. 402.  | (The Revolt of the Tartars)                 |
| 9. | XI, p. 345.   | (Gilfillan's Literary Portraits: Hazlitt)   |

it appears most frequently in his "impassioned prose." The rhythmical possibilities of the construction are probably partly responsible for its more extensive use in that kind of writing: -

"Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun had gone down at rest."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to those given, De Quincey often uses interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory inversions. But these kinds of inversions differ from those already discussed in that they are as much concerned with the effect of the whole sentence as with elements within the sentence. The inversion perhaps may be said to be "performed for its own significance"<sup>2</sup> to indicate the kind of sentence, and the entire sentence, its interrogative, imperative, or exclamatory nature shown by the inversion, is then used as a rhetorical device for emphasis, rhythm, and transition.

The interrogation, the first of these rather special kinds of inversions that I shall consider, is used extensively by De Quincey. He is inordinately fond of the emphatic effect of the rhetorical question. His use of this device is distinctive in (a) the frequency with which he uses it, and (b) the great number that he may use at any one time. The order of the elements in the sentence is usually the customary one for interrogations, although De Quincey sometimes uses other kinds of inversions in his questions and, indeed, may have

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1. XIII, p. 366. (*Suspiria de Profundis*)

2. Fowler, *Modern English Usage*, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

inversions within inversions , or inversions of inversions: -

He may put his questions in the common interrogative order: -

"Why is it that we speak with mixed astonishment and disgust...  
of the mania which possessed the two leaders of civilization?"<sup>1</sup>

"Can this definition be sustained?"<sup>2</sup>

"The Latin, for instance, did not present the spiritual words  
Which such a translation demanded; and how should it, when the  
corresponding ideas had no existence amongst the Romans?"<sup>3</sup>

"What civil forces were gradually evolving?"<sup>4</sup>

"And who of the innumerable interpreters understands the  
twelve hundred and sixty days of Daniel...to mean periods  
of twenty-four hours?"<sup>5</sup>

He may use an elliptical question: -

"...he declares that he will indemnify himself by seizing a  
female captive from the tents of Achilles. Why of Achilles  
more than of any other man?"<sup>6</sup>

"In what way did Dr. Johnson expect that his patriotism  
should be expressed? As a soldier?"<sup>7</sup>

He may use other kinds of inversion in his interrogations: -

"Take away, then, the two forces of Ambition and Avarice -  
what remains even to the male sex as a capital and overruling  
influence in life, except the much nobler force of love?"<sup>8</sup>

"In this dilemma, how did he proceed? Did he abjure Whiggism?"<sup>9</sup>

"Disease - was that separable from man? He that worked through  
that ally - could he ever need to shrink or to cower before his  
enemies in the gate?"<sup>10</sup>

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- |     |               |   |
|-----|---------------|---|
| 1.  | IX, p. 424.   | (California and the Gold-Digging Mania) |
| 2.  | IX, p. 228.   | (The Logic of Political Economy)        |
| 3.  | VIII, p. 277. | (Protestantism)                         |
| 4.  | IX, p. 329.   | (Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism)     |
| 5.  | VIII, p. 41.  | (The Bible and Science)                 |
| 6.  | VI, p. 81.    | (Homer and the Homeridae)               |
| 7.  | IV, p. 89.    | (Life of Milton)                        |
| 8.  | XIV, p. 371.  | (On Novels)                             |
| 9.  | IX, p. 349.   | (Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism)     |
| 10. | VIII, p. 203. | (Judas Iscariot)                        |

De Quincey's most obvious use of the imperative inversion is for emphasis: -

"Behold a lawn islanded with thickets!"<sup>1</sup>

"Hush! whisper whilst we talk of her!"<sup>2</sup>

"Look! now that she is relieved from the weight of an unconfidential presence, she has sat for two hours with her head buried in her hands."<sup>3</sup>

De Quincey often uses a kind of "imaginary imperative"<sup>4</sup> in which the request or command idea of the imperative is weak or almost lacking. He makes use of this form to indicate a slight degree of emphasis or to make a connection: -

"Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances..."<sup>5</sup>

"Let it be kept in mind that...the House of Commons....will be much weaker than formerly..."<sup>6</sup>

"Let us begin at the beginning, - and that, as everybody knows, is Homer."<sup>7</sup>

"But stay. What reason is there for taking up this subject...?"<sup>8</sup>

Almost all of De Quincey's imperative sentences are aimed at the reader. However, he may direct a request or a command occasionally to someone else. For instance, in the well-known passage in the Confessions he requests an imaginary artist to describe the interior of Dove Cottage: -

"Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a-half feet high...make it populous with books; and furthermore, paint me a good fire..."<sup>9</sup>

- 
1. XIII, p. 357. (Suspiria de Profundis)
  2. Ibid., p. 367.
  3. Ibid., p. 364.
  4. Jespersen, op. cit., p. 315.
  5. XIII, p. 317. (The Vision of Sudden Death)
  6. On the Approaching Revolution, op. cit., p. 587.
  7. X, p. 296. (A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature)
  8. V, p. 386. (Joan of Arc)
  9. III, p. 409. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

He also uses the imperative inversion to good effect in The Vision of Sudden Death: -

"Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments - they hurry. Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses - they also hurry!"<sup>1</sup>

He sometimes uses an imperative sentence in an apostrophe, especially in his essays of impassioned prose: -

"Cloud, that hast revealed to us this young creature and her blighted hopes, close up again!"<sup>2</sup>

In connection with the preceding passage, I should call attention to what seems to me the most skillful and effective, although exceptional, use of the imperative inversion in De Quincey's writings, the commands given by "Madonna" in Suspiria de Profundis: -

"...Do thou take him now to thy heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou' - turning to the Mater Tenebrarum, she said, - 'wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him for her. See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope; wither the relenting of love; scorch the fountains of tears; curse him as only thou canst curse...' "<sup>3</sup>

De Quincey is addicted to using a great many exclamatory expressions. His methods of presenting such expressions vary considerably and include devices other than inversion. Especially to be noted is his dependence upon that purely artificial device for showing emphasis, the exclamation mark. The overuse of exclamations, particularly those somewhat arbitrarily labelled so by a mark of punctuation, causes the emphatic intention of these expressions to be weakened and sometimes to fail altogether.

Some of his exclamatory expressions are not inverted: -

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- |    |                             |                                       |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | XIII, p. 316.               | ( <u>The Vision of Sudden Death</u> ) |
| 2. | XIII, p. 357.               | ( <u>Suspiria de Profundis</u> )      |
| 3. | <u>Ibid.</u> , pp. 368-369. |                                       |



"He actually describes Addison, on the whole, as a 'dull prosaist,' and the patron of pedantry!"<sup>1</sup>

He uses a great many interjections: -

"Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues...."<sup>2</sup>

"Heavens! when I look back to the sufferings which I have witnessed..."<sup>3</sup>

"What! shall Rome combine with Jerusalem?"<sup>4</sup>

He uses what might be called an exclamatory vocative: -

"Oh, reader! these are gross falsehoods."<sup>5</sup>

"What else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain? Such a palimpsest is my brain; such a palimpsest, oh reader! is yours."<sup>6</sup>

He may use elliptical expressions of various lengths: -

"No check now from the great philosophers and masculine thinkers of past ages, whose weighty sense has so often been called upon in Parliament to rebuke the rash spirit of change!"<sup>7</sup>

"What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch!"<sup>8</sup>

"Addison, the man of all that ever lived most hostile even to what was good in pedantry, to its tendencies towards the profound in erudition, to its minute precision and the non-popular - Addison, the champion of all that is easy, natural, superficial, - Addison a pedant, and a patron of pedantry!"<sup>9</sup>

He also makes use of exclamatory inversions. He may introduce these by "how" or "what" or allow the inversion itself to indicate the exclamation: -

"How bestial and degrading at this day seem many of the

- 
1. XI, p. 29. (Schlosser's Literary History of the Eighteenth Century)
  2. XIII, p. 326. (Dream Fugue)
  3. XIII, p. 351. (Suspiria de Profundis)
  4. VII, p. 137. (The Essenes)
  5. VIII, p. 339. (Casuistry)
  6. XIII, p. 346. (Suspiria de Profundis)
  7. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS (Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life)
  8. XIII, p. 281. (The English Mail Coach)
  9. XI, p. 29. (Schlosser's Literary History of the Eighteenth Century)

scenes in Smollett! How coarse are the ideals of Fielding! - his odious Squire Western, his odious Tom Jones!"<sup>1</sup>

"How much more nobly did the Roman scholars behave - Cicero, Varro, & c. - who, under every oppression of Greek models, still laboured to cultivate and adorn their own mother tongue!"<sup>2</sup>

"Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which might be gathering ahead, ah! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard!"<sup>3</sup>

"O, deep is the ploughing of earthquake!...O, deep is the ploughing of grief!"<sup>4</sup>

De Quincey uses inversions throughout his entire writings. The use of this device is so frequent that it must be concluded that this mannerism is a highly characteristic feature of his style: one that he used as a natural mode of expression in the composition of his works.

Since inversions are especially appropriate to impassioned prose, De Quincey uses the device most often in this kind of writing. For example, the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death<sup>5</sup> have a great number of inverted elements. Moreover, the manuscripts of these two works show that De Quincey's sentences as first set down contained a large number of inverted elements, and that his revisions actually increased the number somewhat. Apparently, De Quincey in composing these two works employed a device that he habitually used and that he found especially suitable for highly emotion writings. Since the revisions added to the number of inversions he was to some extent consciously making use of the device. The other, less emotional works in manuscript seem to substantiate these points, for, although inversions are to be found, they are less frequent and little attempt is made to recast sentences or parts of sentences in an inverted form.

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- |    |                   |                                       |
|----|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | IV, p. 297.       | (Oliver Goldsmith)                    |
| 2. | IV, p. 232.       | (Richard Bentley)                     |
| 3. | XIII, p. 312.     | ( <u>The Vision of Sudden Death</u> ) |
| 4. | XIII, p. 361.     | ( <u>Suspiria de Profundis</u> )      |
| 5. | PP. 68-80; 84-92. |                                       |

Some of the inversions that De Quincey originally used in the Dream Fugue are as follows: -

"...with arching foot, with eyes upraised..."

"..with a sound from distant waters as of malicious loud laughter, all was hidden in driving showers."

"In panic she fled and often she looked back to some dreadful danger in the rear..."

"....over these also the cruel quicksands closed."

"...too full of pathos they were, too full of almighty joy.."

"These tidings it was our great office to carry...."

"Headlong was our pace..."

"Leagues past counting we had traversed in the cathedral.."

"Of their chaunting was no end; of our headlong gallop was no remission."

The list is only representative. I do not think it necessary to include all the inversions in the Dream Fugue since they are very numerous and can be seen on pages 68-80 where the whole article is given.

I found no revisions that changed the inverted order to the uninverted. However, De Quincey made four revisions that changed the normal sentence order to the inverted: -

"She will founder in seventy seconds."

"In seventy seconds she will founder."<sup>1</sup>

"Mighty mists sate upon its surface."

"Upon its surface sate mighty mists."

"I followed her with my eye by sight."

"By sight I followed her."

"the dying lamps."

"the lamps, dying or sickening."

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1. "In thirty seconds you'll founder" De Quincey remarks to his friend. (Sortilege and Astrology. XIII, p. 257). The friend was attempting to "dip for manuscripts" in De Quincey's bath-tub since De Quincey used that receptacle as a place in which to pile unsorted papers.

When De Quincey revised the Dream Fugue for the Author's Edition, he made three additional inversions. Two of these revisions consisted of shifting the position of the adverb "suddenly" : -

"But the tears and funeral bells were hushed suddenly by a shout."

"But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout."

"There within that crimson radiance, suddenly appeared a female head, and then a female figure."

"There suddenly, within that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman's head, and then of a woman's figure."

"It was the child - now grown to a woman's height."

"The child it was - grown up to woman's height."

The same kind of process is seen in The Vision of Sudden Death. The following is a representative group<sup>1</sup> taken from the original manuscript: -

"All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw - not discursively - but by one flash of intuition."

"Upon the other party rests the action; but upon us, and woe is me! that us was myself, rests the responsibility of warning."

"Strange it is and might to a mere auditor seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the Iliad to prompt the sole recourse that remained."

"But craven he was not; sudden had been the call upon him; and sudden was the answer to the call."

"Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of the horses."

"That knew the young man too certainly."

In the manuscript, De Quincey made two revisions for the purpose of inverting elements: -

"His back was turned to us; But his ear had been already instructed by the dreadful rattle of our harness. -that all was finished as regarded any further effort of his."

"His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness too truly had his ear been instructed that all was finished as regarded any further effort of his."

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1. pp. 84-92 .

"But his was the steadiness of frozen agitation."

"But his was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror."

He made three additional inversions when he revised the article for the Author's Edition: -

"I see nobody at this hour and on this solitary road likely to over-hear your conversation."

"I see nobody at an hour and on a road so solitary likely to over-hear your conversation."

"Our bulk and impetus charmed us against peril in any collision."

"Us, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision."

"We ran past them faster than ever mill-race in our inexorable flight."

"Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight."

De Quincey could be justly accused of making unnecessary inversions. Apparently the habit was so strong that he could not avoid indulging it. Many of his inversions certainly seem to accomplish very little. One wonders, for instance, why De Quincey used inversion in the following sentence since emphasis, cadence, and transition do not require it: -

"In the year 1814 it was that I became acquainted with Sir William Hamilton, the present Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the obvious desire to make a connection clear and, at the same time, to emphasize a certain part of a sentence leads De Quincey into an awkward construction. The second sentence in the following passage must have been the result of these two factors: -

"I was then in Edinburgh for the first time, on a visit to Mrs. Wilson, the mother of Professor Wilson. Him, who at that time neither was a professor, nor dreamed of becoming one (his intention being to pursue his profession of advocate at the Scottish bar), I had known for a little more than five years. Wordsworth it was, then living at Allan Bank in Grasmere, who had introduced me to John Wilson..."<sup>2</sup>

A succession of such inverted sentences may appear unnatural and affected, for what might be termed the stilted effect of too-many

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1. V, p. 308.

(Sir William Hamilton)

2. V, p. 308.

(Sir William Hamilton)



inversions is most awkward in those articles that should proceed in a direct and straightforward manner. The device of inversion that is so highly successful in the ornate prose-poetry is unsuccessful when used extensively in works of a different nature.

The heavy use of inverted elements may be attributed, in part, to what might be called a kind of femininity in De Quincey. His too-frequent inversions are in keeping with several allied characteristics: the many exclamation marks, the concern with minute and sometimes unimportant points, the "italics of old-maidish emphasis,"<sup>1</sup> the elaborate, thin-spun transitions, the nervous asides, and an argumentativeness which sometimes becomes petulance. All of these are stylistic traits which reduce the vigour and force of De Quincey's writings.

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1. Sackville West, op. cit., p. 240.

Unity and Disunity

De Quincey's handling of unity is the third of these rather special characteristics that I shall discuss. The failure to observe unity on many occasions is so marked a feature of his writings that it too must be considered a mannerism.

Many times, De Quincey violates unity by being digressive. His works are the product of a mind perhaps too inclusive. "De Quincey," says Mr. Sackville West, "had probably read too much - almost as bad a mistake, in its paralysing way, as under-reading; then, his memory was too good, plucking continually at his sleeve to notice some detail, some aspect not yet recorded - and yet again some further detail or aspect - until all relation to the matter in hand was lost in mists of digression."<sup>1</sup> This particular characteristic, as I have shown, is exhibited in his use of words and phrases; it is no less apparent in his sentences, paragraphs, and longer units.

A word of caution might be said about De Quincey's digressiveness. While it is undoubtedly true that De Quincey is often elaborate and diffuse and includes all sorts of extraneous matter in his writings, at his best, he shows an admirable balance between subject-matter and presentation. Those passages in which De Quincey reaches his best are those in which the thought and the form are directly suited to each other; those passages, by the fusion of all their diverse elements, do not give to the reader an impression of digressiveness or multifariousness.

It should be noted, however, that De Quincey attains those peaks when his subject-matter by reason of its own vagueness and shifting iridescence is specially suited to his mind and its motions. The

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1. Sackville West, op. cit., p. 243.

material does not require clear and direct prose, and would indeed, be weakened by too straightforward a presentation. The Confessions, The English Mail Coach, and the Suspiria de Profundis arise spontaneously from De Quincey's psychological complications; and consequently their intricate, involuted wanderings do not seem unnatural, but appropriate. It should be added that in his heightened moments, De Quincey is less apt to stray from his subject. The mood keeps him more to the point and admits little or nothing that disrupts the effect.

Yet, it must be admitted that a close analysis of even his most exalted passages does reveal the liability to digress. At all times, De Quincey has a richly multifarious mind which supplies all kinds of buttressing and confirmatory or reinforcing material. When he has sufficient momentum or mood or purpose, the enrichment contributes to the writing without holding up the progress. But when the mood or purpose is less urgent, the argument and the enrichment compete for his attention; and often it is the enrichment that wins, at least until he remembers himself. Hence, the tendency in De Quincey to divagate is ever-present.

#### Sentence Unity and Disunity

De Quincey violates sentence unity in a variety of ways. In the first place, he brings in extraneous material within the sentence itself: material that breaks the continuity of thought is added because a word or phrase recalls other things to his mind: -

"Meantime, however much my personal feelings had altered gradually towards Wordsworth, - and more, I think, in connexion with his pride than through any or all other causes acting jointly (insomuch that I used to say, Never describe Wordsworth as equal in pride to Lucifer; no; but if you have the occasion to write a life of Lucifer, set down that by possibility, in respect to pride, he might

be some type of Wordsworth), - still, I say, my intellectual homage to Wordsworth had not been shaken."<sup>1</sup>

"The library of Pope's father was composed exclusively of polemical divinity, - a proof, by the way, that he was not a blind convert to the Roman Catholic faith, or, if he was so originally, had reviewed the grounds of it, and adhered to it after strenuous study. In this dearth of books at his own home, and until he was able to influence his father in buying more extensively, Pope was benefited by the loans of friends..."<sup>2</sup>

Many of his shorter digressions are simply brief asides that

interrupt the flow of thought only slightly: -

"....free hours would have killed the tranquillity of the whole day, by sowing it (so to speak) with intermitting anxieties.." <sup>3</sup>

"..though, by the way, Jersey has always been engaged in this branch of exportation, and rarely, I am told, fails to "run" a cargo of rogues upon our shore once or so in a season."<sup>4</sup>

"There were, at that moment when Bentley spoke, something more (as I recollect) than ten thousand varieties of reading in the text of the New Testament...."<sup>5</sup>

One of the most frequent causes of interruption is the persistent use of the vocative: -

"Now then, reader, you have arrived at that station from which you overlook the whole of Greek Literature...."<sup>6</sup>

"But then recollect, reader, precisely the Christian truths which stood behind the exoteric doctrines of the Essenes..."<sup>7</sup>

His nice sense of words makes him stop to present a definition, an alternate reading, or an extension of the meaning: -

"....all that morning freshness of animal spirits which, under ordinary circumstances, consumes, as it were, and swallows up the interval between one's self and the distant

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|----------------------|---|
| 1. III, pp. 203-204. | ( <u>Estrangement from Wordsworth</u> ) |
| 2. IV, p. 258.       | ( <u>Pope</u> )                         |
| 3. V, p. 228.        | ( <u>Charles Lamb</u> )                 |
| 4. VIII, p. 286.     | ( <u>On War</u> )                       |
| 5. VIII, p. 271.     | ( <u>Protestantism</u> )                |
| 6. X, p. 218.        | ( <u>Style</u> )                        |
| 7. VII, p. 129.      | ( <u>The Essenes</u> )                  |

object (consumes, that is, in the same sense as Virgil describes a high-blooded horse, on the fret for starting, as traversing the ground with his eye, and devouring the distance in fancy before it is approached),...."<sup>1</sup>

"One bound....landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road."<sup>2</sup>

"The pure racy idiom of colloquial or household English, we have insisted, must be looked for in the circles of well-educated women not too closely connected with books."<sup>3</sup>

"There is a strong idea expressed by the Latin word inconditus, disorganized, or rather unorganized.." "<sup>4</sup>

"For, be it remembered, after all, that any provisional adjudication - one growing out of the fashion or taste of a single era - could not, at any rate, be binding for a different era."<sup>5</sup>

"It would seem, therefore, that the three central forces of health - viz., motion, rest, and temperance (or, by a more adequate expression, adaptation to the organ) - are, in a certain gross way, taught to every man by his personal experience."

He may break the strict unity of a sentence to insert a qualification: -

"First, that under the same law (whatever that law may be) which makes (or is generally thought to make) suicide a crime must the neglect of health be a crime."<sup>7</sup>

Many of his sentences digress for the same reason that his paragraphs and longer works slip away from the subject: one idea suggests a second, that a third, and so on until De Quincey has constructed an elaborate, highly complicated structure containing a series of loosely connected thoughts. This linking of associated ideas is shown in

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1. III, p. 72.

2. XIII, p. 316.

3. X, p. 149.

4. Ibid, p. 154.

5. X, p. 288.

6. VIII, p. 352.

7. Ibid, p. 352.

(Recollections of Charles Lamb)

(The English Mail Coach)

(Style)

(A Brief Appraisal of Greek Literature in its Foremost Pretensions)

(Casuistry)



the following sentence. The starting point is De Quincey's discussion of his brothers' letters: -

"Thinking of them, and their extraordinary merit, I have often been led to believe that every post-town (and many times in the course of a month) carries out numbers of beautifully written letters, and more from women than from men; not that men are to be supposed to be less capable of writing good letters; and, in fact, amongst all the celebrated letter-writers of the past or present times, a large over-balance happens to have been men; but that more frequently women write from their hearts; and the very same cause operates to make female letters good, which operated at one period to make the diction of Roman ladies more pure than that of orators or professional cultivators of the Roman language - and which, at another period, in the Byzantine Court, operated to preserve the purity of the mother idiom within the nurseries and the female drawing rooms of the palace, whilst it was corrupted in the forensic standards and the academic - in the standards of the pulpit and the throne."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey may use any combination of these interrupting devices, if I may so term them; indeed, when he is most discursive, he is capable of using them all in the same sentence. It should also be mentioned that De Quincey makes use of his digressive technique quite often in a spirit of facetiousness: -

"There was, reader, as perhaps you know, about six-score years ago, another Phil., not the same as this Phil. now before us (who could be quite vexed, if you fancied him as old as all that comes to - oh dear, no! he's not near as old): well, that earlier Phil. was Bentley, who wrote (under the name of Phileleutherus Lipsiensis) a pamphlet connected with this very subject, partly against an English infidel of that day."<sup>2</sup>

Even in those sentences that are not obviously digressive, De Quincey makes use of a wealth of material packed into an inordinate

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1. I, pp. 309-310.

(My Brother Pink)

2. VIII, p. 270.

(Protestantism)

number of clauses and phrases. His sentences frequently appear crowded and the thought obscure to the inexperienced reader who is apt to lose his way amidst the wanderings of De Quincey's mind. Such sentences lack unity<sup>1</sup> because of their diffuseness. Excessive wordiness rather than digression is the reason that the following passage appears to be clogged: -

"...between a House which consigned the whole question of Reform, and its supporters, in common with petty larceny and its admirers, to the consideration of Bow Street, and that same House cherishing this cause as its peculiar and darling trust - the interval cannot be thought narrower than between that point which it has now reached, when all the lines of difference have confessedly vanished that could distinguish his Majesty's ministers from what were once called Radicals, and that point at which the abolition of the other House, or of the throne, will be discussed with temper and seriousness."<sup>2</sup>

Yet, it is proof of De Quincey's skill as a writer and of his adroitness in handling ideas that so many of his long sentences are marvellously effective; and, complicated and elaborate as they may be, "weave themselves round the mind of the reader until they seem to assume its very shape."<sup>3</sup>

"Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapour had developed itself far and wide into the appearance of huge aerial draperies, hanging in mighty volumes from the sky to the earth; and at particular points, where the eddies of the breeze acted upon the pendulous skirts of these aerial curtains, rents were perceived, sometimes taking the form of regular arches, portals, and windows, through which began dimly to gleam the heads of camels "indorsed" with human beings - and at intervals the moving of men and horses in tumultuous array - and then through other openings or vistas at far distant points the flashing of polished arms."<sup>4</sup>

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1. cf. pages 131; 151.
  2. On the Approaching Revolution of Great Britain, Blackwood's Magazine, No. CLXXXIV (August, 1831, Part II) p. 325.
  3. Sackville West. op. cit., p. 333.
  4. VII, p. 411. (The Revolt of the Tartars)

In the following even longer sentence, which is a summing up of Wordsworth's prosperity, De Quincey does not lose the continuity of thought: -

"And it must rejoice every man who joins in the public homage now rendered to his powers (and what man is to be found that, more or less, does not?) to hear, with respect to one so lavishly endowed by nature, that he has not been neglected by fortune; that he has never had the finer edge of his sensibilities dulled by the sad anxieties, the degrading fears, the miserable dependencies of debt; that he has been blessed with competency even when poorest; has had hope and cheerful prospects in reversion through every stage of his life; that at all times he has been liberated from reasonable anxieties about the final interests of his children; that at all times he has been blessed with leisure, the very amplest that every man enjoyed, for intellectual pursuits the most delightful; yes, that, even as regards those delicate and coy pursuits, he has possessed, in combination, all the conditions for their most perfect culture - the leisure, the ease, the solitude, the society, the domestic peace, the local scenery - Paradise for his eye, in Miltonic beauty, lying outside his windows, Paradise for his heart, in the perpetual happiness of his own fireside; and, finally, when increasing years might be supposed to demand something more of modern luxuries, and expanding intercourse with society something more of refined elegancies, that his means, still keeping pace in almost arithmetical ratio with his wants, had shed the graces of art upon the failing powers of nature, had stripped infirmity of discomfort, and (so far as the necessities of things will allow) had placed the final stages of life, by plaudits reverberated from senates, benedictions wherever his poems have penetrated, honour, troops of friends - in short, by all that miraculous prosperity can do to evade the primal decrees of nature, had placed the final stages upon a level with the first."<sup>1</sup>

This is a truly remarkable sentence. It shows De Quincey's sureness of touch, his coherent, logical linking of ideas, and takes the reader slowly, but inevitably, from the introductory words to the conclusion.

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1. II, p. 292. (The Lake Poets: William Wordsworth)

### Paragraph Unity and Disunity

De Quincey's paragraphs often follow the pattern of his sentences in their lack of unity. He frequently adds unnecessary material to his paragraphs. In the following passage, the linguistic ability of Sir William Hamilton brings to De Quincey's mind the names of other linguists upon whom he must stop to comment: -

"...Other whisperers there were, who would have persuaded me that Sir William was simply a great linguist. Since the time when I first came to know him, Europe has had several monsters of that class, and amongst others, Cardinal Mezzofanti. Perhaps the cardinal was, on the whole, the greatest of his order. He knew, I believe (so as to speak familiarly), thirty-four languages; whereas a Scandinavian clergyman (Swedish or Norse), who has died since the cardinal, and was reputed to have mastered fifty-six, probably only read them. But what ultimate value attached to this hyperbolic question? If one wrote an epitaph for his eminence, one might be tempted into saying, "Here lies a man that, in the act of dying, committed a robbery, absconding from his poor fellow-creatures with a valuable polygot dictionary." Assuredly, any man who puts his treasures into a form which must perish in company with himself is no profound benefactor to his species. Not thus did Sir William proceed...." <sup>1</sup>

De Quincey wanders even farther afield by adding a footnote which discusses the reasons that led Mezzofanti to learn so many languages: -

"However, if this camel-load of languages tended to no useful result, it ought in justice to be mentioned that at least it originated in a very useful effort of benignity. One terminus lay in the useful, if the other terminus evaporated in smoke. The army of Napoleon was a polygot army to a greater extent than is generally known; and, in

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V, pp. 313-314. ( Sir William Hamilton )

attending the military hospital-beds at Milan, for the purpose of offering spiritual consolations, the pious monk Mezzofanti is reported to have found three-and-twenty languages indispensable. These being wanted for the necessities of conversation, it happened naturally that they were learned radically. He that talks a language cannot deceive himself."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey's awareness of all aspects of a question weaken the unity of many of his paragraphs in that he feels it necessary to explain in detail a particular point he is discussing. The following paragraph is representative, but even longer instances of his precise explanations are not infrequent: -

"This case is remarkable. From the stationary character of all things in the East, there was a probability beforehand that several nations - as in particular, four that we will mention: the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Affghans - should have presented the same purity of descent, untainted by alien blood, which we find in the children of Ishmael, and the children of his half-brother, the patriarch Isaac. Yet, in that case, where would have been the miraculous unity of race predicted for these two nations exclusively by the Scriptures? The fact is, the four nations mentioned have been so profoundly changed by deluges of foreign conquest of foreign intrusion, that at this day, perhaps, no solitary individual could be found whose ancestral line had not been confounded with other bloods. The Arabs only, and the Jews, are under no suspicion of this hybrid mixture. Vast deserts, which insulate one side of the Arabian peninsula, the sea, which insulates the other sides, - have with other causes, preserved the Arab blood from all general attaint of its purity. Ceremonies, institutions, awful scruples of conscience, and, through many centuries, misery and legal persecution, have maintained a still more impassable gulf between the Jews and other races. Spain is the only Christian land where the native blood was at any time intermingled with the Jewish; and hence one cause for the early vigilance of the Inquisition of a Jewish taint in the Spanish hidalgo. Judaism masking itself in Christianity was so keenly suspected, or so haughtily disclaimed, simply because so largely it existed. It was, however, under a very peculiar state of society that, even during an interval, and in a corner, Jews could have intermarried with Christians. Generally, the intensity of reciprocated hatred, long oppression upon the one side, deep degradation upon the other, perpetuated the alienation, had the repulsion of creeds even relaxed. And hence, at this day, the intense purity of the Jewish blood through probably more than six millions of individuals."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., note.

2. VII, pp. 355-356.

(Modern Greece)



But many of De Quincey's paragraphs are of a rambling nature. The ideas are connected, but as the paragraph progresses, they wander far from the subject. I give a fairly long, but interesting, example of this kind of rambling paragraph. De Quincey begins by explaining that he is concerned with an "oversight" committed by his censor. But he does not tell what the oversight is because his discussion becomes involved in the reasons for its existence: -

"Now, resuming the business of my letter, I have first to complain of some oversights committed by my censor. The first is an unwise one: unwise, for it is not wholly without choice, a choice influenced by his daily reading. The very ablest men (and my censor I have reason to think one who is certainly of that number) are and must be emasculated by the constant quality of what they read, whenever that reading lies amongst the unpremeditated polemics of daily newspapers. Newspapers, it is true, have their points of pre-eminence; and it is even an advantage - nay, a very great one - for the eloquent expression of what a man feels, that he should be driven to express himself rapidly. There is the same advantage as in conversation. And what is that? Simply this: that, when thoughts chase each other as rapidly as words can overtake them, each several thought comes to modify that which succeeds so intensely as to carry amongst the whole series, a far more burning logic, a perfect form of cohesion, which is liable to be lost or frozen in the slow progress of careful composition. The case approaches that of personal passion, whether of rage, grief, or revenge. When was it ever found that a man in passionate anger did or could wander from his theme? Incoherence there might be apparently in his words, or his transitions might be too rapid to be intelligible to an unsympathising hearer; but the essential thoughts could not be other wise than closely knit together. Rapid and extempore composition, therefore, has its own special advantages; but they are advantages which appeal to the sensibilities. But, to balance this potent advantage as regards the instant sensibilities, there are evils more than compensatory as regards the understanding. There can in such rapidity be no looking back, so as to adjust the latter sweep of the curve to the former; there can be no looking forward, so as to lay a slow foundation for remote superstructures. There can be no painful evolution of principles; there can be no elaborate analysis; there can be no subtle pursuit of distinction. Passion, indeed (and I have been saying so), has a logic of its own, and a logic as intense as a process of crystallization: but it is a crystallization among the separate parts ab intra: for between the parts ab extra transitions are naturally more than lyrically abrupt."<sup>1</sup>

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1. IX, pp. 360-361.

(Political Parties of Modern England)

In general, the lack of unity is a distinctive feature of De Quincey's paragraphs. But he makes effective use of unity in his concluding paragraphs: those in which he reaches the final stage of his discussion or in which he makes a strong emotional conclusion. The following passage is an illustration.<sup>1</sup> It is the graceful concluding paragraph of De Quincey's very unequal essay on Shelley: -

"Something of a similar effect arises to myself when reviewing the general abstract of Shelley's life - so brief, so full of agitation, so full of strife. When one thinks of the early misery which he suffered, and of the insolent infidelity which, being yet so young, he wooed with a lover's passion, then the darkness of midnight begins to form a deep, impenetrable background, upon which the phantasmagoria of all that is to come may arrange itself in troubled phosphoric streams, and in sweeping processions of woe. Yet, again, when one recurs to his gracious nature, his fearlessness, his truth, his diffusive love and tenderness, suddenly out of the darkness reveals itself a morning of May, forests and thickets of roses advance to the foreground, and from the midst of them looks out "the eternal child," cleansed from his sorrow, radiant with joy, having power given him to forget the misery which he caused, and leaning with his heart upon that dove-like faith against which his erring intellect had rebelled."<sup>2</sup>

Some of De Quincey's most magnificent passages are concluding paragraphs making an emotional peroration. In the following long paragraph, De Quincey handles his material with amazing competence to provide a climactic finish that arises from his discussion of the Greek Revolution: -

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1. Yet even in this passage De Quincey slips away. He provides a footnote on "the eternal child" explaining that he used Gilfillan's phrase and quoting more of the passage from which it was taken.

2. XI, pp. 376.377. (Gilfillan's Literary Portraits: Shelley)

"...Such was the opening scene in the astonishing drama of the Greek Insurrection, which through all its stages was destined to move through fire and blood, and beyond any war in human annals to command the interest of mankind through their sterner affections. We have said that it was eminently a romantic war; but not in the meaning with which we apply that epithet to the semi-fabulous wars of Charlemagne and his Paladins, or even to the Crusaders. Here are no memorable contests of generosity; no triumphs glorified by mercy; no sacrifices of interest the most basely selfish to martial honour; no ear on either side for the pleadings of desolate affliction; no voice in any quarter of commanding justice; no acknowledgment of common nature between the belligerents, no sense of a participation in the same human infirmities, dangers, or necessities. To the fugitive from the field of battle there was scarcely a retreat; to the prisoner there was absolutely no hope. Stern retribution, and the very rapture of vengeance, were the passions which presided on the one side; on the other, fanaticism and the cruelty of fear and hatred, maddened by old hereditary scorn. Wherever the war raged, there followed upon the face of the land one blank Aceldama. A desert tracked the steps of the armies, and a desert in which was no oasis; and the very atmosphere in which men lived and breathed was a chaos of murderous passions. Still it is true that the war was a great romance. For it was filled with change and with elastic rebound from what seemed final extinction, with the spirit of adventure carried to the utmost limits of heroism, with self-devotion on the sublimest scale and the very frenzy of patriotic martyrdom, with resurrection of everlasting hope upon ground seven times blasted by the blighting presence of the enemy, and with flowers radiant in promise springing for ever from under the very tread of the accursed Moslem."<sup>1</sup>

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1. VII, pp. 317-318. (The Revolution of Greece)

### Unity of Longer Units

De Quincey's frequent lack of unity is equally apparent in his longer units. It is always difficult for him to keep to the subject. As a result, large masses of material in his writings are discussions suggested by but not germane to the matter ostensibly under consideration in any particular work. Almost any article may be used to illustrate this point, but because of this aspect of De Quincey's style seems especially obvious in Reform as Affecting the Habits of Private Life,

I include here a list of the subjects he discusses in that essay: -

The widespread effects of Reform; education; change in the physical plants and course of study in the universities; the products of the changed universities in Parliament; the resemblance to the American products; a digression on the lack of gentlemen in America; the inferior kind of Parliament as a result of the lack of gentlemen; the lack of manners in Parliament; the consequent dearth of accomplished orators; the decay of senatorial eloquence; the loss of intellectual powers; the corresponding increase in political power; the lowering of morals; the misuse of power concerning divorce; the check by religion of a similar misuse in the time of Charles I; the present lowered prestige of religion; the ease of divorce in the Protestant countries in Europe; plebian morality; the desire of the unthinking for the Simplification of the Law; the need for its complexity; the undoubted widespread harm that will be done if the Law is simplified; the Colonies; the West Indies; the breach of contracts by the new irresponsible Parliament; the resulting dissension in Parliament itself; the East Indies; India; the internal wars in India that will arise; the intrigues that will take place in India; the loss of India; the loss of a British aristocracy; the rise of an incompetent class of the new rich; the division of land; the consequent degeneration of the clergy; the present high standard of the British clergy; the low standard of the continental clergy; the similar lowering of the British clergy; the loss of church offices; the resulting increase in population; India's anarchy and the consequent refusal to admit immigrants; a digression on the Pindarry War in India; the change in the character of the magistracy; the final result of the Reform Bill, a series of Revolutions.<sup>1</sup>

The organizational pattern of this article is at once recognizable. It is the pattern of De Quincey's associational thinking which I have pointed out in the earlier sections of this thesis. One idea suggests the following one and is connected to it, but the work as a whole suffers badly from the lack of a clear-cut plan.

De Quincey's review<sup>1</sup> of Thomas Gordon's History of the Greek Revolution shows more specific violations of unity. I have used this review because it illustrates so vividly the characteristic treatment of material that is found, in varying degrees, in De Quincey's works.

Gordon's work is a two-volume account of the Greek Revolution from its beginning in 1821 to the end of the major conflict in 1827. The two volumes are divided into seven "books," each "book" telling the events of a year. Although Gordon sometimes departs from this order in narrating an event that runs through two years (such as the Siege of Athens), he is easily followed, and in general is clear and straightforward. The various phases of the Revolution are presented with a sense of proportion, and the style, although prosaic, is unambiguous.

In reviewing this work, De Quincey apparently intended to summarize the major events of the conflict as Gordon had presented them and to add comments that were pertinent. The handling of the material shows De Quincey's characteristic lack of planning. He divides his review into three parts: In part one, 27 pages, De Quincey covers 183 pages of Gordon's History and considers the author, the background of

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1. Cf. page 17.



the revolt, and events to the end of April, 1821. He includes in these first 27 pages a seven-page footnote in which he discusses the Suliotes, a group that he feels Gordon has neglected. In part two, 19 pages, he covers from page 184 to page 504 in the History, 320 pages, and summarizes events to the end of 1822. In part three, only 18 pages, De Quincey attempts to cover all of Volume Two of Gordon's work, 508 pages, and summarizes the events from the beginning of 1832 to the end of 1827 - five whole years. As a result, De Quincey's review is lop-sided. He presses too much matter in part one, omits important material in part three, and includes a lengthy, cumbersome footnote that should not be there at all.

The lengthy footnote on the Suliotes is a quite obvious excrescence, but some of the extraneous material is not so apparent, for De Quincey introduces in his review several of his own hobby-horses without making it at all clear that he is not summarizing Gordon's opinions. The most notable of these highly reprehensible departures concerns the part played in the struggle by Byron. Gordon spends some time<sup>1</sup> describing the activities of Byron in Greece and speaks of him in various eulogistic phrases: -

"It required no ordinary share of coolness and judgment to bear with these endless importunities, and to select proper objects on which to bestow the wealth he intended to devote to Greece. With admirable clearness of vision, he saw at once the delicacy of his position, the character of the people he was amongst, and the nature of their most urgent needs."<sup>2</sup>

"Lord Byron's arrival gave a new impulse to everything; besides disbursing his promised loan of £ 4000, he took into his services 500 Souliotes, and liberally subscribed to the artillery, the press, school, and hospitals."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Gordon, op. cit., pp. 105-119.
  2. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 107.
  3. Ibid., p. 110.

"....his letters were pithy, full of good sense, and written in a most conciliatory tone."<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Byron, Gordon describes the grief of the Greeks and remarks: -

"Similar tokens of grief were repeated in every part of Greece, and his name will never be forgotten there..."<sup>2</sup>

Without indicating that he is departing from the text which he is summarizing, De Quincey disposes of Byron's part in the Greek Revolution in the following two passages: -

"At this time Lord Byron began to interest himself in Grecian affairs: and, as he insisted on the same points, besides offering £ 4000 in aid of the fleet, the measures were at length adopted....."

"It was in the last of these years that Lord Byron died at Messolonghi. He had come thither from the Ionian Islands, as the headquarters at that time of Navrocordato. His plans, however, were childish, feeble, and distracted; real and disinterested love for Greece was alien to his feelings, and impossible to his nature. All grew out of intense vanity. It was a new mode for turning the attention of England upon himself, and reviving the interest in his name. So long as it answered that end, Greece and her cause might have contrived to detain him; supposing that he had not been assassinated in some one of the intrigues and uproars into which his conceit of his importance was sure to have drawn him. Neither he nor Navrocordato nor even more important persons had the power to do much for Greece in her then condition. His wealth was no real loss to Greece."

And yet, in spite of the dubious nature of the passages just quoted and many others of a similar nature in De Quincey's works, the lack of unity gives many of his articles a special kind of charm, for it is in the detailed, the digressive, and the rambling passages that

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1. Ibid.  
2. Ibid., p. 117.

De Quincey develops some of his most interesting points and presents some of his most entertaining discussions. But this kind of charm requires from the reader not only a knowledge of De Quincey's vagaries but also a genuine liking for his personality. The reader must approach an article with the understanding that De Quincey will not stick to the subject but will discuss ideas suggested by it. The reader must be willing to give up a rapid progress along the main road for the sake of exploring the bypaths with a whimsical companion. That so many of De Quincey's articles are so often effective is a proof that the bypaths are interesting and the companion entertaining.

## Chapter Four

### Rhythm and Cadence

## I

De Quincey played a major role in the nineteenth century revival of prose poetry. If not the originator, he was one of the important leaders in bringing back a form of literary expression that had been neglected after the seventeenth century. De Quincey's own elaborate patterns and his insistence that the skilful use of rhythm is essential to the best prose style were significant factors in the departure from the plain style of the preceding age. Saintsbury points out: -

"...we had, in De Quincey's time, constant and pressing need of an instauration of ornate prose writing. Whether he was actually the man who "fished the murex up," or took the hint from that everlasting murex-finder, though not always the murex-user, S.T.C., I have said that I do not know; that I do not believe it possible to be certain; and that I do not care. Between him and Landor the prize certainly lies...." <sup>1</sup>

Saintsbury remarks concerning De Quincey's contribution to prose poetry of the nineteenth century: -

"Here is a re-discovered art; a lamp dug out of a tomb, found burning, and used to rekindle other lamps, long disused and unlit; a "British shell" (as poor Collins, putting immortal poetry in a mortal, and most deservedly mortal lingo, has it) which, catching from older examples the undying melody of the ocean, revives it for fresh sets of willing ears. Let anybody who will, cavil; let us bow the knee and hear." <sup>2</sup>

De Quincey himself makes quite clear his own attitude concerning the part rhythm plays in prose: -

"...far be it from me to say one word in praise of those - people of how narrow a sensibility! - who imagine that a

- 
1. George Saintsbury. A History of English Prose Rhythm. London : 1912, pp. 320-321.
  2. Ibid., p. 321



simple ( that is, according to many tastes, an unelevated and unrhythmical ) style - take, for instance, an Addisonian or a Swiftian style - is unconditionally good. Not so: all depends upon the subject; and there is a style transcending these and all other modes of simplicity by infinite degrees, and in the same proportion impossible to most men: the rhythmical - the continuous - what in French is called the soutenu; which to humbler styles stands in relation of an organ to a shepherd's pipe. This also finds its justification in its subject; and the subject which can justify it must be of corresponding quality - loftier, and, therefore, rare." <sup>1</sup>

It is then not surprising that De Quincey praises the highly rhythmical constructions of Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor <sup>2</sup> and depreciates the "vernacularity" <sup>3</sup> of the eighteenth century writers of the plain style. <sup>4</sup> He also is critical of Charles Lamb's failure to detect rhythm in prose: -

"Lamb had no sense of the rhythmical in prose composition. Rhythmus, or ~~pomp~~ of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses, in the structure of sentences, were effects of art as much thrown away upon him as the voice of the charmer upon the deaf adder. We ourselves, occupying the very station of polar opposition to that of Lamb, - being as morbidly perhaps in the one excess as he in the other, - naturally detected this omission in Lamb's nature at an early stage of our acquaintance. Not the fabled Regulus, with his eyelids torn away, and his uncurtained eyeballs exposed to the noon-tide glare of a Carthaginian sun, could have shrieked with more anguish of recoil from torture than we from certain sentences and periods in which Lamb perceived no fault at all." <sup>5</sup>

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1. XI, p. 51. (Recollections of Charles Lamb)
  2. X, pp. 104-109. (Rhetoric)
  3. XI, p. 17. (Schlosser's Literary History)
  4. Ibid., pp. 17-25. X, p. 108 ff. (Rhetoric)
  5. V, p. 235. (Charles Lamb)

Rhythm

The detailed analysis made by Saintsbury<sup>1</sup> shows the techniques that De Quincey uses in his rhythmized prose. I should like to summarize three general points that Saintsbury makes with reference to De Quincey's practice: (1) De Quincey's prose-rhythm is marked by variety. In his best works, he avoids using the regular rhythmical patterns that produce a blank-verse movement. Certain feet and longer rhythmical combinations are repeated but are so varied that a more or less regular metrical beat does not result. (2) The general pattern of De Quincey's rhythmized prose is an "undulating" one marked by an elaborate, intricate arrangement of rhythmical devices. There is a sweeping rise-and-fall in his prose; the sections "serpentine on continuously."<sup>2</sup> (3) De Quincey's rhythmized prose, and rhythmized prose in general, is especially effective in works dealing with dreams, which, by their very nature, are rhythmical and yet need not make a rational transition from one incident to another. "Dreams...thus combine...the greatest possible variety with the least possible

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1. Saintsbury, op.cit., pp. 305-321. Of necessity, any consideration of De Quincey's rhythmized prose must stem from Saintsbury's analysis. In showing the various kinds of prose-feet, I have used Norton R. Tempest's The Rhythm of English Prose. Cambridge: 1930, pp. 35-74. His terms and symbols (slightly altered versions of Saintsbury's) are, I think, well-enough known so that tables showing them are unnecessary. Although general discussions of De Quincey's rhythm and cadence are plentiful, detailed analyses are not, the most notable of those that do exist being possibly the short discussion by Oliver Elton in A Survey of English Literature, Vol.2, London: pp. 312-313. Other works (such as André Classe's The Rhythm of English Prose) are concerned mostly with spoken English. I have not used to any great extent other such individualistic works as J.H.Scott's Rhythmic Prose, University of Iowa; 1928, as a consideration of the terminology alone would be much too long for my purpose.

2. Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 308.

disturbance. Now this combination...is the very soul, the quintessence, the constituting form and idea - of harmonious prose." 1

There are many aspects of De Quincey's harmonious prose, but as certain techniques that he uses can be seen more distinctly when considered separately, I shall confine my discussion for the next few pages to prose-rhythm. One of his most effective devices is evident in the next example: In a single sentence, De Quincey has used a number of different kinds of prose-feet. Although the amphibrach is the commonest, the passage contains iambs, trochees, anapaests, paeons, and one bacchius, dactyl, and spondee. Moreover, De Quincey has mixed them so admirably that, although the same kinds of prose-feet recur, they do not recur so regularly that they form a definite metrical pattern. Not more than two of the same kind of prose-foot are used together.

/ / | x / x | x / | / / x | x / x |  
 "Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure  
 x x / | x / x | x x / | x x x / | x x / |  
 not by sounds that perish or by words that go astray, but by signs  
 x / x | x / x | x / | x / x | x / x | / x |  
 in Heaven, by changes on Earth, by pulses on secret rivers,  
 / x x | / x | x / x | x / x | / x | / x |  
 heraldries painted on darkness and hieroglyphics written  
 x x / x | x x / |  
 on the tablets of the brain." 2

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1. Saintsbury, op. cit., p. 311
  2. XIII, p. 365. (Suspiria de Profundis)

The rise and fall of De Quincey's harmonious prose comes from his frequent use of waved rhythm: a series of rhythmical feet in which the accented syllable is preceded and followed by an unaccented syllable or syllables. The amphibrach, as I have shown, and the paeon are feet which De Quincey uses most often and most effectively in his prose-poetry. Many of the rhythmical passages in the Dream Fugue contain combinations of these two kinds of feet. The following passage comes near to being too metrical in its regularity: -

x x x / | x x / x | x / x | / x | x / x |  
 "And upon her deck | what a bevy | of human | flowers; | young women |  
 x / x | x / | x / x | x x / x | x / x |  
 how lovely, | young men | how noble, | that were dancing | together, |  
 x / x | / x | x / | x / | x / x |  
 and slowly | drifting | towards us | amidst music | and incense, |  
 x / / x | x / x | x / x | / x x | x / x x |  
 amidst blossoms | from forests | and gorgeous | corymbi | from vintages, |  
 x / / x x | / x x | x x / x | x x / x |  
 amidst natural | carolling, | and the echoes | of sweet girlish |  
 / x | / x | x / x | / x | / x | x / x |  
 laughter. | Slowly | the pinnace | nears us, | gaily | she hails us, |  
 x / x x | x x x / | x / | x / x | x x / x | / |  
 and silently | she disappears | beneath | the shadow | of our mighty | bows. |  
 x / | x x x / x | x / x | x / x | x x / x |  
 But then, | as at some signal | from heaven, | the music, | and the carols, |  
 x x x / | x / x | / x | / x x |  
 and the sweet echoing | of girlish | laughter | - all are hushed." 1

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1. XIII, p. 319. (Dream Fugue)

De Quincey's sense of rhythm, seen in its more subtle, manifestations in his prose-poetry, may express itself in a more obvious manner. Some of his writings contain rhythmical patterns of a "quasi-metrical"<sup>1</sup> nature. Joan of Arc, for example, has passages in which the rhythmical arrangement is so definite and so well-marked that it is what Tempest terms "antiphonic."<sup>2</sup> A recurrence of similar prose-feet is apparent in the following selection, which also contains an example of a monosyllabic foot ("she") placed in a pivotal position. The passage has a great deal of repetition and is heavily accented: -

x / x / | x x x / x | / | / |  
 "The shepherd girl | that had delivered | France | - she |  
 x x / x | / | x x / x x x / |  
 from her dungeon, | she, | from her baiting | at the stake, |  
 / | x x / x | x / | x x / x | x x / |  
 she, | from her duel | with fire, | as she entered | her last dream | -  
 / | x / x | / | x / x | x x / x | / | x / |  
 saw | Domremy, | saw | the fountain | of Domremy, | saw | the pomp |  
 x / x | x / | x / x | x / x | x / x |  
 of forests | in which | her childhood | had wandered. | That Easter |  
 / x x | x / | x / x | x x / x x | / |  
 festival | which man | had denied | to her languishing | heart | -  
 x x x / x | x / x | x x / x |  
 that resurrection | of spring-time, | which the darkness |  
 x / x | x x x / x | x / | / x x / x |  
 of dungeons | had intercepted | from her, | hungering after |  
 x / x x | / x x | x / x | x x / | / x | / |  
 the glorious | liberty | of forests | - were by God | given | back |  
 x x x / | x / x | x x x / x | x / |  
 into her hands, | as jewels | that had been stolen | from her |  
 x / x |  
 by robbers." <sup>3</sup>

1. Tempest, *op.cit.*, p. 128.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 131. "...Rhythm ...built up of carefully balanced rhythmical groups."

3. V, p. 414. (Joan of Arc)



Yet such passages, although lacking in subtlety, have often in their short heavy accents a rhythm appropriate to the meaning. For example, in such passages as the following, the brusque movement of the prose fits the drama of the event. Although criticism might be levelled at the rather melodramatic treatment of the theme, there is no doubt that the rhythm is suitable: -

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & / & | & x & / & | & x & / & x & | & x & x & / & / & | & / & | \\ \text{"For all,} & | & \text{except} & | & \text{this comfort} & | & \text{from her farewell} & | & \text{dream,} & | & & & & & & & \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & / & | & / & | & x & / & | & x & / & | & x & / & | & / & x & | \\ \text{she had died} & | & \text{- died,} & | & \text{amidst} & | & \text{the tears} & | & \text{of ten} & | & \text{thousand} & | & & & & & \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} / & x & x & | & / & | & x & / & | & x & / & | & x & / & x & | & x & / & x & | \\ \text{enemies} & | & \text{- died,} & | & \text{amidst} & | & \text{the drums} & | & \text{and trumpets} & | & \text{of armies} & | & \text{-} & & & & & \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} / & | & x & / & | & / & | & x & / & x & | & x & / & | & / & | & / & x & | \\ \text{died,} & | & \text{amidst} & | & \text{peals} & | & \text{redoubling} & | & \text{upon} & | & \text{peals,} & | & \text{volleys} & | & & & & \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & / & | & / & x & | & x & x & x & / & x & | & / & x & x & | & x & / & x & | \\ \text{upon} & | & \text{volleys,} & | & \text{from the saluting} & | & \text{clarions} & | & \text{of martyrs.} & | & \text{"} & | & & & & & & \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} 1 \\ 2 \end{array}$$

But a great deal of De Quincey's prose is not highly rhythmical, and even in his best works, he is likely to include much that lacks rhythm of the highest excellence. For example, in the often-quoted passages describing the three sisters in the Suspiria de Profundis,<sup>2</sup> De Quincey has impaired the rhythm of the passage on the first sister by including a great many commonplace constructions, and has lowered the rhythmical quality of the section on the second so that it contains "nothing of the absolutely first class,"<sup>3</sup> but has shown an unusual

1. V, p. 414. (Joan of Arc)

2. XIII, pp. 365-368. (Suspiria de Profundis) ; Saintsbury, op. cit., pp. 316-319.

3. Ibid., p. 317.

degree of skill in the effective handling of the rhythm in the passage on the third. The unequal quality of the rhythm in the Suspiria and in other writings of De Quincey arises once more from De Quincey's recurring inability to keep his attention fixed on his subject. Rhythm, as well as thought, is spoiled by his frequent side-glances at anything that catches his eye. The rhythm of the following passage suffers from this defect in continuity. De Quincey does not get started on the rhythmical flow of the sentence until he has disposed of unnecessary matter at the beginning: -

x / x | x x / x x | x / x |  
 "The image, the memorial, the record, which for me is  
 derived from a palimpsest as to one great fact in our  
 human being, and which immediately I will show you,  
 x x / | x / x | x / x | / | / x | x / x |  
 is but too repellent of laughter; or, even if laughter  
 / | x / x x | x x x / | x / x | x  
 had been possible, it would have been such laughter as  
 / x x | x / x | x x / | x / x | / x |  
 oftentimes is thrown off from the fields of ocean, laughter  
 x / | x x / | x x / | / x x | / x |  
 that hides, or that seems to evade, mustering tumult;  
 / / | x x / x | x / x x | / x x |  
 foam-bells that weave garlands of phosphoric radiance  
 x x / x | x x / x | x / x | x / x |  
 for one moment round the eddies of gleaming abysses;  
 / x x | x / / | / x | / | x x / |  
 mimicries of earth-born flowers that for the eye

/        / x | x / x x | x / x x | x x / |  
 raise phantoms | of gaiety, | as oftentimes | for the ear |  
 x        / | x / x | x / x x | / x | / x |  
 they raise | the echoes | of fugitive | laughter, | mixing |  
 x x    / x | x /    / x | x x / x | /    1  
 with the ravings | and choir-voices | of an angry | sea."

One can only feel sorry that a sentence which ends so rhythmically should begin in such a limping fashion. Certainly the concluding phrases contain many rhythmical devices: the repetition of the double accent in the spondaic "foam-bells" in "earth-born" and "choir-voices," the advance in stress in "that weave garlands of phosphoric radiance," the effective weaving of the paeonic feet through the passage, and the pleasing alternation of long and short prose-feet.

### III

#### Cadence

De Quincey's prose may also be considered on the basis of the  
 2  
 rhythmical sequences that various writers call cadence. Cadence is based upon the distinctive combinations of accented and unaccented syllables occurring at the end of certain phrases and clauses. Because there are varying opinions concerning the different kinds of cadence, a brief summary of the terms I have used is necessary.

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1.V, p. 414. (Joan of Arc)

2.Tempest, op. cit., pp. 80-103, adds to and alters the forms used by M.W.Croll in The Cadence of English Oratorical Prose, St.Ph.XVI (Jan., 1919), pp. 1-55. Edward L. Parker in The Cursus in Sir Thomas Browne, PMLA, LII, 1938, pp. 1037-43, keeps close to Croll's forms but adds some variations. Lannering, op.cit., pp. 127-140, uses only a limited number of Croll's forms.

English prose contains cadences that correspond to some extent to the cursus found in Latin prose. The basic forms of the English cursus as given by Tempest are listed in the following table. I have included the notations, figures showing the accented syllables as counted from the end, and examples: -

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
|                            | / x x / x   |
| .1. <u>Cursus planus</u> . | / x x / x, 5-2, "watching and waiting."                 |
|                            | / x x x / x   |
| Extension.                 | / x x x / x, 6-2, "pardon for offenders."               |
|                            | / x x / x x   |
| .2. <u>Cursus tardus</u> . | / x x / x x, 6-3, "vision of memory."                   |
|                            | / x x x / x x   |
| Extension.                 | / x x x / x x, 7-3, "secrets of philosophy."            |
|                            | / x x / x   |
| .3. <u>Cursus velox</u> .  | / x x / x / x, 7-4-2, "suitable Christmas presents."    |
|                            | / x x x / x   |
| Extension.                 | / x x x / x / x, 8-4-2, "broke into a thousand pieces." |

Trispondaic. velox and one or more trochees. / x x / x / x / x,  
 9-6-4-2, "sailors are born  
 x / x / x  
 to toil unending."

One other kind may be noted: / x / x / x x, 7-5-3. "ancient magnanimity," with extensions of 8-5-3 and 9-5-3. Other longer variations exist also, but there is some doubt in my mind as to the value of attempting to distinguish these. Sequences which are much longer than eight or nine syllables tend to break up into the shorter ones.

Tempest also makes a classification of native cadences. These

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1. Tempest, op. cit., p. 81.

combinations do not correspond to the Latin cursus but arise from the "monosyllabic and dissyllabic character" <sup>1</sup> of the English language. Because some of the kinds of native cadences are useful in my consideration of De Quincey's prose, I give a condensation <sup>2</sup> of the list found in Tempest's work: -

1. Beginning and ending with a strong stress and containing only two strong stresses. (a) / x /, 3-1, "weary backs,"  
(b) / x x /, 4-1, "ships from the sea," (c) / x x x /, 5-1, "landing on the rocks," (d) / x x x x /, 6-1, "motionless as the snow."
2. Beginning and ending with a strong stress and containing three strong stresses. (a) / x / x /, 5-3-1, "cold and silent man," (b) / x x / x /, 6-3-1, "singing a plaintive note," (c) / x x x / x /, 7-3-1, "known among the Highland hills."
3. Containing clash of strong stresses foreign to cursus forms. (a) Those ending on a strong stress. / x / /, 4-2-1, "mile or two high," / x x / /, 5-2-1, "now for the first time," / x x x / /, 6-2-1, "colouring of pure light."  
(b) Those ending with a light syllable. / x / / x, 5-3-2, "king of all England," / x x / / x, 6-3-2, "bending my eye forward," / / / x, 4-3-2, "dark red roses."

1. Tempest, op. cit., p. 82.

2. Ibid., pp. 84-86.



De Quincey's skilful use of cadences is seen clearly in his dream writings. In the next example from one of them, the rhythm flows in subtle combinations of waved and falling prose feet which form sequences of unemphatic cadences. The unaccented clause and phrase endings and the resulting cadences form an intricate, but effective pattern that is appropriate to the mood. In the following passage, I have underlined the native cadences in red, the cursus in black: -

x / x | / x | x x / x | / x x | x / |  
 "This city, therefore, like a mighty galleon, with all  
 x x / x | / x | / x | / x | x / x |  
her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling  
 / x | / / x | x x x / x | / x |  
perfect, seems floating upon the noiseless depths of  
 / x | x / x x | x / x | / x | x x |  
ocean; and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the  
 x / x | / x x | x / x | x / | / x |  
translucent atmosphere of water that now stretches  
 / x | / / x | / x | x / x | x / x |  
like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment,  
 / x x | x / x x | / x | / x x x / |  
mariners from every clime look down into her courts  
 x x / x x | / x / | x / x | x / |  
and her palaces, count her gates, and number the spires  
 x x / x |  
of her churches."<sup>1</sup>

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1. XIII, p. 360. (Suspiria de Profundis)

To show clearly the different features of De Quincey's practice, I have listed the cadences in the passage and connected those of the same kind: -

/ x x / x / x	
all her apparel mounted	7-4-2
/ x / x	
streamers flying	4-2
/ x / x	
tackling perfect	4-2
/ x x x x / x /	
floating upon the noiseless depths	8-3-1
/ x / x	
depths of ocean	4-2
/ x x x / x /	
oftentimes in glassy calms	7-3-1
/ x x x / x	
atmosphere of water	6-2
/ / x / x	
air-woven awning	5-4-2
/ x x / x	
silent encampment	5-2
/ x x x / x x /	
mariners from every clime	8-4-1
/ x x / x x	
courts and her palaces	6-3
/ x /	
count her gates	3-1
/ x /	
number the spires	4-1
/ x x / x	
spires of her churches	5-2

To link the several portions of the passage, De Quincey uses several forms of the cursus planus, native cadences with 4-1 and 3-1 endings, and the 4-2 ending of the cursus velox. But he avoids too regular a rhythmical pattern by alternating the different kinds of cadences and by varying the forms of each cadence.

By the next selection, I illustrate a slightly different practice. The feeling and emotion are much more intense. The passage has prose-feet that are shorter and more heavily accented than those of the preceding example, and the cadenced phrases are more emphatic and abrupt: -

x x / / x | x x / x | x / x | / |  
 "But the third sister, who is also the youngest! Hush!  
 / x | / x / | x / | x / x | / x | / |  
whisper while we talk of her! Her kingdom is not large,  
 x / | x / | x / | x x / | x / x | / |  
 or else no flesh could live; but within that kingdom all  
 / x | x / | x / | / x x | x / | x / x | / |  
power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele,  
 / x | / x | x / | x / | x / | / | / x |  
rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not;  
 x x / | / x | x / | x x / x | x / x |  
 and her eyes, rising so high might be hidden by distance.  
 x / x | / | x / | x / x | x / x | x |  
 But being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through  
 x / x | / | x / | x x / | x / | / |  
the treble veil of crape that she wears, the fierce light  
 x x / x | / x x | x / | x / x | x / x |  
of a blazing misery that rests not for matins or vespers,  
 x / | x / | x / | x / | x / x | x x |  
for noon of day or noon of night for ebbing or for  
 / x | / | x x / | x x / x | / |  
flowing tide may be read from the very ground." <sup>1</sup>

1. XIII, pp. 367-368. (*Suspiria de Profundis*) Saintsbury., *op. cit.*, pp. 317-319, makes an extensive analysis of the passage. Tempest, *op. cit.*, p. 128, uses it in his analysis of prose-rhythm and cadence.

The cadences and the way in which they are linked are given in the following list: -

/ x x / x	
also the youngest	5-2
/ x / x / x /	
whisper while we talk of her	7-5-3-1
/ x / x /	
kingdom is not large	5-3-1
/ x /	
flesh could live	3-1
/ x x /	
power is hers	4-1
/ x / x /	
that of Cybele	5-3-1
/ x / x /	
beyond the reach of sight	5-3-1
/ x x /	
rising so high	4-1
/ x x / x	
hidden by distance	5-2
/ x / x /	
being what they are	5-3-1
/ x / x /	
treble veil of crape	5-3-1
/ x x /	
crape that she wears	4-1
/ x x / x / xx	
light of a blazing misery	3-5-3
/ x x / x	
rests not for matins	5-2
/ x x / x	
matins or vespers	5-2
/ x x x / x /	
ebbing or for flowing tide	7-3-1
/ x x / x /	
read from the very ground	6-3-1

In contrast to the preceding example, cadences ending in heavy stresses predominate and make the rhythmical divisions more obvious. The cursus planus 5-2 and the native cadence 5-3-1 weave through the

entire passage to form a continuous thread which binds the rhythmical elements together. Although the different kinds of cadences are alternated to provide some variety, there is surprisingly little variation within the cadences themselves, and they appear almost balanced in the regularity of their pattern.

By the next example, I illustrate an even more symmetrical arrangement of cadences: -

/ | / x x | / | x / | x / x x x | / x |  
 "Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance,  
 / x | x x x / | x / | x / | x / | x / x |  
 wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened  
 \ x x / | x x / | / | x / | x / x | / |  
 me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore.  
 x / x | / x | / x x | x / x | \ |  
 The morning twilight even then was breaking; and,  
 x x / x | x x / x | x x / | x x x / |  
 by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl,  
 x / | x x / x | x / | / x | x / | x / |  
 adorned with a garland of white roses about her head  
 x x / | / x x | / x | x \ | x / x x |  
 for some great festival, running along the solitary  
 / | x x / x x | x / |  
 strand in extremity of haste." 1

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1. XIII, p. 521. (Dream Fugue)



The cadences and the manner in which they combine are as follows: -

/ / x x /	
sweet funeral bells	5-4-1
/ x x x / x	
incalculable distance	6-2
/ x x x x /	
wailing over the dead	6-1
/ x / x /	
die before the dawn	5-3-1
/ x x x /	
awakened me as I slept	6-4-1
/ x x /	
slept in a boat	4-1
/ x /	
familiar shore	3-1
/ x / x	
morning twilight	4-2
/ x x x / x	
even then was breaking	6-2
/ x x x / x	
dusky revelations	6-2
/ x x x /	
revelations which it spread	5-2
/ x x / x	
adorned with a garland	5-2
/ x x / / x	
garland of white roses	6-3-2
/ x x / x /	
roses about her head	6-3-1
/ x x x /	
solitary strand	5-1
/ x x x /	
extremity of haste	5-1

The majority of the cadences in this passage are of two kinds: the native cadences ending in an accented syllable, the dominant cadence of the first sentence; and the cursus planus, the dominant cadence of the second sentence. In each sentence, one or more of the cadences is of the kind which is dominant in the next sentence,

so that there is a linking and a continuation of the movement through the passage. Variation is achieved not only by alternating the kinds of cadences but by overlapping them. Even so, the regular rhythm produced by the cadences placed in pairs is perhaps more metrical than is desirable in prose.

In the following passage, De Quincey uses slightly different techniques of rhythm and cadence to move easily from violent motion to calmness: -

/ / x | x / / | x | x / / |  
 "Like rivers in flood wheeling round headlands,  
 / / x x | x / | x x x / | x | x / x |  
 like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests,  
 / x | x / x | / | x / | x / x | x / x |  
 faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness,  
 x / x | / | x x | / | x | / | x | / | x |  
 our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled  
 / x | / | x | x x x / | x / | x / x |  
warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us -  
 / | / | x x | x x / x | / | x | x x / |  
dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept  
 x / | x / x | x x / x | x / | x x / |  
in God, from Créci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached  
 x / | x / x / | / | x x x / | x x / |  
the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last

/ x / | x / x | x x x / x | x / x  
 bas-relief, | already | had we recovered | the arrow-  
 / | / | x x x / x x x | / x | / | /  
 like | flight | of the illimitable | central | aisle, | when  
 / x | x x / | x / x | x x / | x / \ |  
 coming | up this aisle | to meet us | we beheld | afar off |  
 x / x | / | x / | x x / x | x / |  
 a female | child, | that rode | in a carriage | as frail |  
 x / x | x / | x / | x / x | / |  
 as flowers. | The mists | which went | before her | hid |  
 x / | x / x | x x \ / | x  
 the fawns | that drew her, | but could not hide | the  
 / | x / x | / x | x / | x / |  
 shells | and tropic | flowers | with which | she played | -  
 x x \ / | x / x | / | x / |  
 but could not | hide | the lovely | smiles, | by which |  
 x / x | x / | x x / x | x / x |  
 she uttered | her trust | in the mighty | cathedral, |  
 x x x / x x | x / | x x / x |  
 and in the | cherubim | that looked | down upon her |  
 x x / x | / | x x / x |  
 from the mighty | shafts | of its pillars." <sup>1</sup>

The interweaving of cadences that is so characteristic of De  
 Quincey's rhythmized prose is shown in the following list: -

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1. XIII, p. 324. (Dream Fugue)

/ x x /	4-1
rivers in flood	
/ x x /	5-2-1
wheeling round headlands	
/ x x x /	5-1
hurricanes that ride	
/ x x / x	5-2
secrets of forests	
/ x x / x / x / x	9-6-4-2
equipage carried earthly passions	
/ x / x / x	6-4-2
kindled warrior instincts	
/ x / x / x	6-4-2
dust that lay around us	
/ x / x	4-2
noble fathers	
/ x x x / x /	7-3-1
fathers that had slept in God	
/ x x x / x	6-2
Créci to Trafalgar	
/ x / x /	5-3-1
last sarcophagus	
/ / x /	4-3-1
last bas-relief	
/ x / /	4-2-1
arrow-like flight	
/ x x x / x /	7-3-1
illimitable central aisle	
/ x x x / x / x	8-4-2
coming up this aisle to meet us	
/ x /	3-1
female child	
/ x x / x	5-2
rode in a carriage	
/ x x / x / x	7-4-2
carriage as frail as flowers	
/ x / x / x	6-4-2
mists which went before her	
/ x / x / x	6-4-2
hid the fawns that drew her	
/ x / x / x	6-4-2
shells and tropic flowers	
/ x x / x /	6-3-1
flowers with which she played	
/ x / x /	5-3-1
hide the lovely smiles	
/ x x /	3-1
uttered her trust	
/ x x / x x / x	8-5-2
trust in the mighty cathedral	
/ x x x / x x / x	9-5-2
cherubim that looked down upon her	
/ x /	5-1
mighty shafts	
/ x x / x	5-2
shafts of its pillars	

In this passage, the cadences are fairly short. Of the cursus, there are four planus, 5-2, and three extensions of the planus, 6-2, 8-5-2, and 9-5-2; two forms of the velox, 7-4-2 and 8-4-2, and one trispindaic, 9-6-4-2. Most of the other cadences are the short native forms that are close to being metrical (6-4-2) or that lend themselves quite easily to metrical or quasi-metrical arrangements (4-1, 6-3-1). The two sets of three native cadences, 6-4-2, are especially obvious in their symmetrical arrangement. The native cadence (7-(3-1) and the cursus planus (6)(5-2) at the close of each sentence act as linking devices.

The selection is remarkable for the manner in which the cadence and rhythm support the feeling. For example, in the series of similes used to describe the speed of the dream-horses, the cadences are short and hurried, and the rhythm is composed of heavily accented feet containing a number of light syllables. The combination helps to create the effect of the rise-and-fall of the galloping horses, the pounding of their hooves, and the sweep of their forward movement. The three-fold motion is continued through the first part of the second sentence where cadence and rhythm gradually change to correspond to the slower, gentler movements of the child of the cathedral.



#### IV

The revisions made in The Vision of Sudden Death and the Dream Fugue show quite clearly De Quincey's awareness of the importance of rhythm and cadence. Almost all of the changes that he made in the two works increase the harmonious quality of the prose and are proofs of De Quincey's skill in mingling rhythm, cadence, thought, and feeling to build up set-pieces of rhythmized prose.

Most of De Quincey's revisions are intended to build up the symphonic structure of the prose. He changes passages to increase the undulating movement of the rhythm. Although amphibrachs, paeons, (especially the third), and feet with falling rhythm are the most evident, De Quincey may use almost any kind of prose-foot in his revisions. He avoids placing many feet with heavy stresses close together and seems to have been careful to keep his prose flowing by including a sufficient number of lightly stressed syllables. Perhaps intentionally, De Quincey so revises some passages as to bring them very close to the regularity of verse.

The cadences, being sequences built on prose-rhythm, show the same undulation. His revisions sometimes cause the cadences to overlap or to form new cadences, and sometimes they simply intensify the cadence set down in the original passage. Some of his revisions consist of adding long cadenced phrases or clauses. In general, his use of cadences is marked by variety and complexity, rather than by the predominance of any one specific kind.

Quite often, De Quincey's revisions alter the number of paeons and amphibrachs in a passage. In the following illustrations, I have underlined the elements added or changed and have indicated the cadences in each example: -

/ x x | x / x x | x x  
 "shuddering|humanity|on the

/ | x x / x  
 brink|of abysses."

cursus tardus: 7-3

planus: 5-2

/ x x | x / x x | x x  
 "shuddering|humanity|on the

/ | x x / x x / x  
 brink|of almighty|abysses."

cursus tardus: 7-3

planus: 5-2

In the following example, he breaks up a too-regular line by adding a third paeon and a trochaic adjective: -

x / x | x / x | x  
 "some impulse|of current|or

/ x  
 vortex."

cursus planus: 5-2; 5-2

x / x | x x / x | / x |  
 "some impulse|of a heady|current|

x / x / x  
 or sudden|vortex."

cursus velox: 8-4-2; 7-4-2

Possibly an attempt to avoid the suggestion of an abrupt internal rhyme (hidden in) caused De Quincey to set three amphibrachs together: -

/ | x / x | x / x |  
 "all|was hidden|in driving|

/ x  
 showers."

cursus velox: 7-4-2

/ | x / x | x / x | x  
 "all|was hidden|for ever|in

/ x | / x  
driving|showers."

cursus planus: 5-2

velox : 7-4-2

The sentence in which the following example appears must have caused De Quincey some concern, for he revised it extensively,

finally crossed it all out, and wrote a new version on the back of the sheet. He then made a final change ("last" to "dying" ) and achieved an unusually rhythmical and cadenced construction: -

/ | x / x / / x x | x      / | x / x / / x x | x  
 "saw|this marble|arm|uttering|her      "saw|this marble|arm|uttering|her

/ | / | x x / / | x      / x | / | x x / x | / x  
 last|hope|and her last|despair."      dying|hope|and her dying|despair."

native: 5-3-1; 6-2-1; 6-3-2

native: 5-3-1; 7-3-1

cursus velox: 7-4-2

When he reprinted the work in the Author's Edition, he set the cursus velox apart from the rest of the sentence by the repetition of "uttering." The passage then had a variety of devices: repetition ( "dying," "dying," "uttering," "uttering," with the "ing" ending connecting the two ), alliteration ("dying," "dying," "despair" ), and an increased falling movement in the trochaic endings of the last three feet: -

/ | x / x / / x x | x / x | / | x / / x x | x  
 "saw|this marble|arm|uttering|her dying|hope,|and then|uttering|her

/ x | / x  
 dying|despair."

native: 5-3-1; 7-3-1.

cursus velox: 8-4-2

De Quincey may change elements and increase the falling rhythm of a passage. He is quite likely to make such changes at the end of a clause or a phrase in order to do away with the abruptness of a stressed close: -

/ x | x / x | x /  
 "fragment|of music|too stern."

cursus planus: 5-2

native: 4-1

x x / x | x x / | x  
 "I was carried|over land|and

/ | x x / x | /  
 sea|to some distant|land."

native: 5-3-1; 3-1

/ x | x / x | x / x x  
 "fragment|of music|too passionate."

cursus planus: 5-2

tardus: 6-3

x x / x | x x / | x / |  
 "I was carried|over land|and sea|

x x / x | / x  
 to some distant|kingdom."

native: 5-3-1

cursus velox: 7-4-2

He may also increase the falling rhythm within a passage. In the next example, the di-iamb "in act to soar" appeared in the manuscript, was crossed out, re-inserted in the same place, and finally ( and I feel reluctantly) was discarded in favour of the trochaic construction:-

x / x | x / x / | x /  
 "of woman's|Ionic form|in act

x / | x x / | x x  
 to soar|from the ruins|of her

/  
 grave."

native: 6-3-1; 5-3-1; 4-1

x / x | x / x / | / x  
 "of woman's|Ionic form|bending

/ x | x x / | x x  
forward|from the ruins|of her

/  
 grave."

native: 6-3-1; 5-4-2; 4-1

The next passage is a slightly different example of a revision that increases the amount of falling rhythm in a sentence. De Quincey has broken up a group of iambic feet, has omitted words that cause many heavy stresses to come together, and has made two trochaic words dactylic. The result is effective prose, for the sentence as it

was first written is choppy and abrupt; the revised sentence is rhythmical and cadenced: -

<p>x x / x x   x x /            "and ten seconds more   I myself            / x x   / x x /            wheeled round it   only   in time            x /   x / x   / x            to see   the cruel   quicksand            / x x / x /   /            closing   above   her fair   young          /          head."</p>	<p>x x / x   x / x   /          "in an instant   I also   wheeled          x x   x / x   x / x            round it,   but only   to see   the          / x x   /   / x x            treacherous   sands   gathering            x /   x /            above   her head."</p>
---	--

native: 6-3-1; 6-4-2

cursus: 8-5-3

native: 5-3-1; 6-3-1

The revisions that add rising or level rhythm are not very numerous. But, since the first drafts have a considerable number of feet with rising or level rhythm, De Quincey would be unlikely to increase the number very much. Rather, he would be attracted to falling rhythm to round off the movement of rising rhythm in order to achieve the undulation that he desired, as well as to waved rhythm which is itself undulatory.

Sometimes, however, he does make a revision that increases the rising or level rhythm of a passage. He may make the close of a phrase or a clause more emphatic by making it end on an accented instead of an unaccented syllable: -



x / x | x x / x x |  
 "the revel|and the revellers|

/ x / x  
 had departed."

cursus tardus: 7-3

velox: 7-4-2

x / x | x x / x x |  
 "the revel|and the revellers|

x / | x /  
 were found|no more."

cursus tardus: 7-3

native: 7-3-1

He may also add feet with rising rhythm, or monosyllabic feet, or a combination of these forms in passages in which a series of abrupt stresses are desired: -

x x / | x / | x \ x  
 "as she rose|and sank|upon her

/ | / | x / | / x  
 seat,|tossed|her arms|wildly|

x / x  
 to heaven...."

native: 3-1; 5-3-1; 5-3-2

cursus planus: 5-2

x x / | x / | x \ x  
 "as she rose|and sank|upon her

/ | / | x / | / x  
 seat,|sank|and rose,|threw|up her

/ | / | x | x / x  
 arms|wildly|to heaven."

native: 3-1; 5-3-1; 3-1; 6-3-2

cursus planus: 5-2

Certain longer revisions that De Quincey made in the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death might well be considered separately. In the manuscripts of these two works, there are revisions consisting of fairly long phrases and clauses inserted between the lines. In the printed copies, there are revisions of certain phrases and clauses that De Quincey added when he prepared the essays for the Author's Edition. Some of these additions are in themselves well-defined cadences. I have not found that any particular kind of cadence preponderates in the additions, but, in general, the cursus are less in evidence than the

native cadences, and there are few native cadences with a clash of strong stresses. The resulting prose-rhythm is in keeping with that which has already been discussed.

The longest and most involved of the added cadences, if I may so term them, is found on page four of the manuscript of the Dream Fugue. Apparently it was composed later than the passage to which it now belongs since it is written carefully between the lines with a pen of a finer point. In the following example, I have given a portion of the passage in which the addition occurs, have underlined the addition, and have listed the cadences: -

x / | x / x x | x x / | x / | x / | x / |  
 "and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth,  
 x / | x / | / x x | / | x x / x x / | x  
 except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from  
 x / x / | / | / x x / | x / x / | x  
 the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a  
 / x x / x x / | x x / x / | x / x x  
 requiem over the grave of the buried child and over her  
 / x /  
 blighted dawn."

native:

- 3-1. funeral bells  
 6-3-1. bells from the desert seas  
 4-1. over the grave  
 6-3-1. grave of the buried child  
 6-3-1. over her blighted dawn

cursus velox:

- 7-4-2. rising again more softly

But most of such additions add a single cadence or a group of cadences that are not too involved. The following example is of this kind, and is one of the most brilliant combinations of cadence, rhythm, and feeling. It, too, is a single addition, being crowded in, in its entirety, at the bottom of a page: -

/ x x / x / x / x x /  
"Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs  
 x x / x / x x / x / x x / x x  
of our horses. Fear not for him, if human energy  
 x / x  
can suffice."

<p>native:          / x x /          4-1. fear not for him</p>	<p><u>cursus:</u>          / x x  <u>velox:</u> 7-4-2. fast are the          / x / x          flying moments          / x x x /  <u>planus:</u> 9-5-2. faster are the hoofs          x x / x          of our horses          / x x x / x  <u>planus:</u> 6-2. energy can suffice</p>
--	--

The following passage, in which the revision adds a direct cadenced construction, is representative of the rest of the group: -

x / x / x / x / x / x / x /  
"I sate, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given  
 x x / x x / x / x / x /  
to the memory of those that died before the dawn...."

<p>native:          / x / x / x          6-4-2. men have ever given          / x x x /          5-1. memory of those          / x / x /          5-3-1. died before the dawn</p>	<p><u>cursus tardus:</u> 7-3. given to the          / x x x          / x x          memory</p>
--	--

Certain conclusions might be drawn from De Quincey's use of rhythm and cadence. In the first place, it is apparent that in his use of these two features, as is not always the case with De Quincey, there is an admirable fusion of theory and practice. De Quincey emphasizes the importance of rhythmized prose for certain kinds of works, and then employs rhythmized prose consummately in his own writings. To do so, he uses effectively all the techniques of rhythm and cadence that create the harmonious effect he desires.

In addition, the revisions in the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death indicate a remarkable combination of creative genius and artistic consciousness. It is not known if the manuscripts are the earliest versions of these two works, and it is, of course, impossible to tell how much De Quincey composed mentally before he set pen to paper. But it is obvious that the manuscripts are early drafts and that they have been subject to a great deal of careful revision. It is noticeable that before revision, the manuscripts show the same techniques of rhythm and cadence that are used so effectively in the final copies. The devices of prose-rhythm and cadence are not so polished and they suffer from not being worked up, but the undulatory rhythm and the interweaving of the cadences were already fairly complete before the revisions were made. De Quincey's revisions consist mostly of what of what might be called intensifications: they deepen, but do not alter radically what is already there. For example, De Quincey uses a great many amphibrachs and third

paeons in his early versions, and many of his revisions consist of adding more amphibrachs and third paeons or of changing other kinds of feet into these two forms. It seems apparent that the general pattern of the rhythm and cadence in the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death must have been established in the earliest draft, and that De Quincey's changes consisted of elaborating and making more ornate his first ideas. Such a process is that of a writer who is making effective use of his natural abilities. De Quincey has taken a form of literary expression - rhythmized prose - that is suitable for his own individual kind of genius, and with all possible artistic care, has developed it to the fullest extent.



## Chapter Five

### Imaginative Elements

## I

The imaginative gift of De Quincey has often been the subject for comment. Minto refers to his "extraordinary power of elevating";<sup>1</sup> Japp speaks admiringly of his "imaginative faculty";<sup>2</sup> Miss Powell says of his use of the imagination that "in some directions he goes further than (Wordsworth and Coleridge) upon their own lines";<sup>3</sup> and Miss Darbishire regards him as "a Romantic of the Romantics."<sup>4</sup>

But some critics feel that too much stress has been laid on the purely imaginative features of his writings. Metcalfe, in considering other aspects of De Quincey's works, remarks that "he has been seen through a luminous, dream-coloured haze which rises like an exquisite exhalation from his poetic pages."<sup>5</sup> Proctor, too, is of the opinion that so much emphasis has been placed on the imaginative side of his thinking that other features have been neglected.<sup>6</sup> Jordan, also, remarks "an age which thinks of De Quincey as the 'Opium-Eater' and connects him with flamboyant dreams and prodigious sighs, needs to recall that he fancied himself a logician, and that there was indeed a strong logical strand in his intellectual fiber."<sup>7</sup> The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature makes a different point by saying that De Quincey's imaginative writings seem to arouse only the extremes of opinion: writers either

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1. Minto, op. cit., p. 59.

2. Japp, op. cit., p. 455.

3. A. E. Powell, The Romantic Theory of Poetry: An Examination in Light of Croce's Aesthetic, London: 1926, p. 164.

4. De Quincey's Literary Criticism, H. Darbishire, ed., London: 1909, p. 25.

5. John Calvin Metcalfe, De Quincey: A Portrait, Cambridge: 1940, p. 152.

6. Proctor, op. cit., pp. 1-10.

7. John E. Jordan, Thomas De Quincey, Literary Critic, Berkeley: 1952, p. 69.

praise them highly or disparage them violently; they consider the works to be either "prose eloquence or sham sublime." <sup>1</sup>

But there is no doubt that De Quincey himself regarded as his best those works of his that are highly imaginative. In the General Preface (1853) to his Author's Edition, after placing the bulk of his writings into two large general classes, he goes on to say: -

"Finally, as a third class, and, in virtue of their aim, as a far higher class of compositions... I rank The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, and, also, (but more emphatically) the Suspiria de Profundis." <sup>2</sup>

De Quincey feels that these two works have definite claims as works of art. He points out to the reader the difficulty of such prose: -

"First, I desire to remind him of the perilous difficulty besieging all attempts to clothe in words the visionary scenes derived from the world of dreams, where a single false note, a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music; and, secondly, I desire him to consider the utter sterility of universal literature in this one department of impassioned prose; which certainly argues some singular difficulty, suggesting a singular duty of indulgence in criticising any attempt that even imperfectly succeeds." <sup>3</sup>

To show De Quincey's treatment of imaginative elements, I have given special consideration to two features: (1) the kinds of figures of speech that he uses and the purposes for which he introduces them, and (2) the characteristic imagery that appears in his works. <sup>4</sup>

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1. Conc. CHEL, p. 667.

2. I, p. 14.

3. Ibid.

4. I have based my discussion on the material given in René Welleck and Austin Warren's Theory of Literature, New York: 1949, pp. 190-218. Other works that have been helpful are Kenneth Burke's The Philosophy of Literary Form, New York: 1943; J. Middleton Murry's Countries of the Mind (2nd series) London: 1931; and I.A. Richards' The Philosophy of Rhetoric, New York: 1936.

## II

### Figures of Speech

In his imaginative passages, De Quincey's prose is often marked by a lack of preciseness and definiteness. Although he presents enough concrete details to prevent the effect from being dissipated altogether, he is careful to use concepts that are shadowy and vague and which have no set limits. Obviously he wishes to avoid the restrictions that hamper the imagination when over-specific or too-detailed terms are used. As a result, he hints, rather than tells directly, and the devices that he employs are those which rise naturally from the misty ambience that surrounds his impassioned prose.

The most common single device used by De Quincey is personification. This figure of speech reaches its highest development in his prose-poetry, but is characteristic of his style throughout his writings, being one of his favourite devices in even his more mundane works. Indeed, as Minto points out, De Quincey's use of personification "is so characteristic that we at once think of him when we find it appearing strongly in another writer." <sup>1</sup>

Some of De Quincey's personifications are consciously developed and carried to some length. The Suspiria de Profundis provides the most illuminating example, for in this work, De Quincey explains his method of presentation: -

"These Sisters - by what name shall we call them? If I say simply "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking

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1. Minto, op. cit., p. 55.

the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow - separate cases of sorrow, - whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart, and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations, - that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, Our Ladies of Sorrow.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that De Quincey makes quite clear that Our Ladies of Sorrow are abstractions representing universal individual sufferings and that they are deliberately personified to make the presentation more forceful. Many of the most distinctive personifications that De Quincey uses contain these same two features; that is, they represent an abstraction which is composed of or allied to some great experience of mankind, and such an abstraction is personified in a vivid and direct manner.

De Quincey also leans heavily on metaphors in his imaginative passages. Like his personifications, De Quincey's most characteristic metaphors are usually presented quite deliberately, extended to some length and complexity, and concerned with the profundities of human existence. For example, De Quincey's ornate metaphor of the palimpsest of the human brain is introduced directly and consciously and then dealt with in a variety of ways arising from different suggestions from the metaphor itself. Since the metaphor runs to almost three pages, I give only the introductory portion: -

"What else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain? Such a palimpsest is my brain; such a palimpsest, oh

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1. XIII, p. 364. (Suspiria de Profundis)

reader! is yours. Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet, in reality, not one has been extinguished. And, if in the vellum palimpsest, lying amongst the other diplomata of human archives or libraries, there is anything fantastic or which moves to laughter, as oftentimes there is in the grotesque collisions of those successive themes, having no natural connexion, which by pure accident have consecutively occupied the roll, yet, in our own heaven-created palimpsest, the deep memorial palimpsest of the brain, there are not and cannot be such incoherencies." <sup>1</sup>

Although De Quincey employs personifications and metaphors most distinctively, he also makes extensive use of similes. And here, I am afraid, I must disagree with Minto, who remarks: -

"There are writers, such as De Quincey, who use comparatively few formal similitudes, and yet use metaphors, personifications, synecdoches, or metonymy, in almost every sentence." <sup>2</sup>

But similes are "formal similitudes," and although it is quite true that they are not so frequent as the other two figures of speech, they are numerous enough to be noticeable in De Quincey's writings. In general, his similes are shorter, and he is less likely to carry them to extremes. The next example, which employs a favourite comparison found several times in De Quincey's works, is fully representative: -

"That science (Political Economy)... like the fantastic architecture which the winds are everlastingly pursuing in the Arabian desert, would exhibit phantom arrays of fleeting columns and fluctuating edifices, which under the very breath that had created them, would be for ever collapsing into dust." <sup>3</sup>

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1. XIII, pp. 346-347. (Suspiria de Profundis)

2. Minto, op. cit., p. 13.

3. IX, p. 119. (The Logic of Political Economy). See also Minto, op. cit., p. 57.



It is to be noted that De Quincey does not use many similes in his best-known imaginative works. It is apparent that the formality of the direct comparison is not suited, in some respects, to the deliberate mistiness of De Quincey's impassioned prose. The use of "like" or "as" or any similar term places the two objects compared in a side-by-side arrangement in order to bring out the resemblance. A great deal of De Quincey's imaginative writings, especially his dream works, can not be cast into such an obvious form since the effect arises from a kind of identification. That is, one object is taken to be another, or in some cases fades into another; and the simile with its intermediate term of comparison is much too obvious to be effective.

Hyperboles are among the most common figures of speech used by De Quincey. But it should be pointed out that many of his wildly imaginative passages do not resort to hyperboles. The passages are accounts of what seem to be real, although strange, experiences. This is especially true of the dream-visions, for these appeared real to the dreamer, a point that De Quincey himself makes quite clearly: -

"...I seemed every night to descend, - not metaphorically, but literally to descend - into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever re-ascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I had re-ascended...." <sup>1</sup>

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1. III, p. 435. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

Although De Quincey's accounts of dreams are usually depictions of what appear to be literal experiences, in many places throughout his writings he uses the hyperbole as an obvious literary device: -

"How potent must that splendour have been whose mere reflection shot rays upon a distant crown, under another heaven, and across the wilderness of fourteen centuries ! " <sup>1</sup>

"Immediately in rapture she soared upwards from her couch....." <sup>2</sup>

De Quincey also makes frequent use of the apostrophe. The following passage is representative: -

"Cloud, that hast revealed to us this young creature and her blighted hopes, close up again ! And now, a few years later, - not more than four or five, - give back to us the latest arrears of the changes which thou concealest within thy draperies. Once more, "open sesame ! " and show us a third generation." <sup>3</sup>

De Quincey uses apostrophes throughout his works, the figure of speech being especially numerous in his works of impassioned prose. The Dream Fugue is possibly the most obvious example, for the opening consists of a long address to the " Passion of Sudden Death," and the closing portion contains four apostrophes: to the "Dying Trumpeter," to the "darkness of the grave," to the "poms of life," and to the "young girl." Similar apostrophes are found throughout his dream-works. Perhaps the best known is his apostrophe

- 
1. VI, p. 230. (The Caesars )
  2. III, p. 455. (The Daughter of Lebanon)
  3. XIII, p. 357. (Suspiria de Profundis)

to opium<sup>1</sup> which is an echo of Sir Walter Raleigh's famous apostrophe to Death.

De Quincey's "vein of irony peculiarly his own"<sup>2</sup> is another distinctive characteristic of his style. I give a portion of Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts to illustrate his ironical manner: -

"But another calumny, which wounds my feelings no less, is - that, in my critical judgements upon murders, it is pretended I show myself biassed by an unworthy nationality. This notion must have grown out of that particular lecture published by you, in which it is true that I draw my illustrations chiefly from English murders. But that is all an accident. I had never a thought of insinuating that most meritorious murders have not been committed in other parts of Great Britain and also in various regions of the continent. In particular, with respect to the Germans - who are loud in complaining that the only murder I have condescended to notice as coming from their country (viz, the Mannheim baker's ) was due to an Englishman - I protest that this circumstance had no weight in my selection.... As to French murders, I acknowledge that not one out of a hundred is entirely satisfactory to my mind: circumstances of outrage and unnatural horror disfigure most of them: and very rarely it is that you will find a French murder in a chaste and pure style...." <sup>3</sup>

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1. I have quoted it (page 46) under the section of this thesis that discusses emphasis. De Quincey thought highly of that particular passage in Raleigh's works, calling it "Sir Walter Raleigh's immortal apostrophe to Death," ( XI, p. 18. Schlosser's Literary History of the Eighteenth Century) so that it appears that Raleigh's apostrophe was used as a pattern.

2. Minto, op. cit., p. 69.

3. National Library of Scotland, Blackwood's Magazine MSS  
To the Editor of Blackwood's Magazine.

De Quincey uses figures of speech for several different purposes. One of his most frequent uses is to intensify the feeling of a passage. The personification in the System of the Heavens of the nebula in Orion is an excellent example, for De Quincey describes the nebula as a malignant, brutal face scowling into the heavens. Thus, through the use of human attributes, he makes more forceful the feeling of evil that the natural phenomenon arouses in his imagination: -

"You see a head thrown back, and raising its face ( or eyes, if eyes it had) in the very anguish of hatred to some unknown heavens. What should be its skull wears what might be an Assyrian tiara, only ending behind in a floating train. This head rests upon a beautifully developed neck and throat. All power being given to the awful enemy, he is beautiful where he pleases, in order to point and envenom his ghostly ugliness. The mouth... is amply developed. Brutalities unspeakable sit upon his upper lip...." <sup>1</sup>

Similarly, much of the vague, undefined sense of foreboding that permeates De Quincey's dream passages is intensified by the use of personification: -

"...upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to reveal itself; the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens; faces, imploring, wrathful, despairing...." <sup>2</sup>

In much the same manner, he employs a metaphor to make more forceful the emotional impact: -

"If you walk through a forest at certain seasons, you will see what is called a blaze of white paint upon a certain élite of the trees marked out by the forester as ripe for the axe. Such a blaze, if the shadowy world could reveal its futurities,

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1. VIII, p. 19. (System of the Heavens as Revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes)

2. III, p. 441. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

would be seen everywhere distributing its secret badges of cognisance amongst our youthful men and women. Of those that, in the expression of Pericles, constitute the vernal section of our population, what a multitudinous crowd would be seen to wear upon their foreheads the same ghastly blaze, or some equivalent symbol of dedication to an early grave." <sup>1</sup>

De Quincey makes frequent use of the "great intensity of emotion" <sup>2</sup> arising from the apostrophe. The following fervent apostrophe to Shakespeare contains also an impressive group of similes: -

"O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art, but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers, like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert, but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident! " <sup>3</sup>

Similarly, he uses a hyperbole to make more intense a feeling of indignation: -

" Meantime, my brother R., in an evil hour, having been removed from that most quiet of human sanctuaries, having forfeited that peace which possibly he was never to retrieve, fell ( as I have said) into the power of this Moloch. And this Moloch upon him illustrated the laws of his establishment; him also, the gentle, the beautiful, but also the proud, the haughty, he beat, kicked, trampled on! " <sup>4</sup>

Frequently, De Quincey uses a figure of speech to make an idea clearer. For example, the personification in the following passage helps to bring out the point effectively: -

- 
1. III, pp. 421-422 (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  2. Bain, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 222.
  3. X, pp. 393-394. (On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth)
  4. I, p. 295. (My Brother Pink)

"... it is a fact that, next after Rome, England is the country in which rhetoric prospered most at a time when science was unborn as a popular interest, and the commercial activities of aftertimes were yet sleeping in their rudiments." 1

He frequently uses a metaphor to achieve clarity. In the next passage, De Quincey spins out the metaphor to some length to illuminate the subject that he is discussing: -

"But, if all rhetoric is a mode of pyrotechny, and all pyrotechnics are by necessity fugitive, yet even in these frail pomps there are many degrees of frailty. Some fire-works require an hour's duration for the expansion of their glory; others, as if formed from fulminating powder, expire in the very act of birth. Precisely on that scale of duration and of power stand the glitterings of rhetoric that are not worked into the texture, but washed on from the outside." 2

Metaphors shorter than the one used in the preceding passage are often used to sharpen the different aspects of a subject: -

"The murderers and the murder must be insulated + cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs - locked up and sequestered in some deep recess...." 3

"In the Shakespere period we see the fulness of life, and the enormity of power throwing up a tropical exuberance of vegetation." 4

Similarly, he sometimes makes a point vivid through the use of metonymy, as in the last clause of the next passage: -

"...And something also is due, no doubt, to the example of the mighty leader in the Roman Revolution, to the intellectual and literary tastes diffused by him... who had first shown the possibility of uniting the military leader's truncheon with the stylus of the rhetorician." 5

- 
- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1.X, p. 100.     | (Rhetoric)                               |
| 2.V, p. 232.     | (Charles Lamb)                           |
| 3.X, p. 393.     | (On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth) |
| 4.X, p. 202.     | (Style)                                  |
| 5.Ibid., p. 195. |  |



He may also use a simile or a hyperbole to make an idea clearer: -

"The illimitable attributes of the Roman Prince, boundless and comprehensive as the universal air - like that also bright and apprehensible to the most vagrant eye, yet in parts ( and those not far removed) unfathomable as outer space...." 1

"...the poor credulous negro; he is mastered by original faith, and has perished by a languishing decay thousands of times under the knowledge that Obl had been set for him." 2

Sometimes, De Quincey employs figures of speech to produce mental surprise. For example, the personification in the next passage does not intensify an emotion or make an idea more clear, but adds an agreeable touch of surprise that is effective: -

"Real shipwrecks present often such incoherent libraries on the floors of the hungry sea. Magnificent is the library that sleeps unvexed by criticism at the bottom of the ocean, Indian or Atlantic, from the mere annual contributions and keepsakes, the never-ending Forget-me-nots of mighty English Indiamen." 3

In a slightly different manner, De Quincey uses a metaphor to conclude his article on Ceylon: -

"Ceylon will be born again: in our hands she will first answer to the great summons of nature, and will become in fact, what by providential destiny she is, - the queen lotus of the Indian seas, and the Pandora of Islands." 4

De Quincey often introduces a short simile into a passage for the purpose of mental surprise: -

- 
- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1. VI. p. 227.   | (The Caesars)                               |
| 2. VIII. p. 288. | (Protestantism)                             |
| 3. III. p. 340.  | (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater) |
| 4. VII. p. 456.  | (Ceylon)                                    |

"The English language ( and, therefore, the English literature) is running forward towards its ultimate mission of eating up, like Aaron's rod, all other languages." 1

De Quincey often uses figures of speech for the sake of humour. He frequently employs a kind of jocular personification: -

"Some think our planet is in that stage of her life which correspond to the playful period of twelve or thirteen in a spirited girl. Such a girl, were it not that she is checked by a sweet natural sense of feminine reserve, you might call a romp; but not a hoyden, observe; no horse-play; oh no, nothing of that sort. And these people fancy that earthquakes, volcanoes, and all such escapades, will be over, will "cease and determine," as soon as our Earth reaches the age of maidenly bashfulness. Poor thing! It's quite natural, you know, in a healthy growing girl! " 2

The humorous apostrophe is used by De Quincey throughout his works: -

" Now, therefore, turn out, ye belles of Germany! turn out before London on this fine 26th of August 1824. Place aux dames! Let us have a grand procession to the temple of Paphos with its hundred altars: and Mr. Goethe, nearly 50 years old at the date of Wilhelm Meister, shall be the high-priest...." 3

Metaphors with a touch of humour appear often in De Quincey's works. He uses the following, rather waspish metaphor several times: -

"...that has been cases where the talking impulse was sustained by mere vivacity of animal spirits, without knowledge to support it, and liable to the full weight of Archbishop Huet's sarcasm, that it was a diarrhoea of garrulity, a fluxe de bouche." 4

He may also use hyperboles to create a certain playful kind of humour. The following passage describes the reputation of the "Spanish Military Nun" : -

"Europe, if it had ever heard of her name ( as very shortly it shall hear), - Kings, Pope, Cardinals, if

- 
- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1. II, p. 251. | ( <u>The Lake Poets: William Wordsworth</u> )                           |
| 2. VIII, p. 9. | ( <u>System of the Heavens as Revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes</u> ) |
| 3. XI, p.229.  | ( <u>Goethe's Wilhelm Meister</u> )                                     |
| 4. X, p.155.   | ( <u>Style</u> )  |

if they were but aware of her existence (which in six months they shall be), - would thirst for an introduction to our Catalina...Eminences, Excellencies, Highnesses - nay, even Royalties and Holinesses - are languishing to see her, or soon will be...." 1

But irony is the most characteristic figure of speech that De Quincey uses for humour. To be mildly amusing, he often uses short passages that are slightly ironical: -

"Parliament had not then made it a crime...for a man to sleep out-of-doors ( as some twenty years later was done by our benign legislators) ; as yet that was no crime. By the law I came to know sin, and, looking back to the Cambrian hills from distant year, discovered to my surprise what a parliamentary wretch I had been in elder days, when I slept amongst cows on the open hill-sides." 2

He also uses irony in some of his humorously argumentative passages. The next illustration will show what I mean. Before proceeding to a long and destructive attack upon Josephus, De Quincey explains that he would prefer to be generous: -

"We do not blame, far from it - we admire those who find it necessary (even at the cost of a little self-delusion ) to place themselves in a state of charity with an author treating such subjects, and in whose company they were to travel some thousands of pages. We also find it painful to read an author and to loathe him. We, too, would be glad to suppose, as a possibility about Josephus, what many adopt as a certainty. But we know too much. Unfortunately, we have read Josephus with too scrutinizing... an eye. We know him to be an unprincipled man and an ignoble man...." 3

De Quincey's irony is seen at its best in Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts. By considering murder "aesthetically as the

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| 1.XIII, | p. 220. | ( <u>The Spanish Military Nun</u> )                  |
| 2.III,  | p. 353. | ( <u>The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater</u> ) |
| 3.VII,  | p. 128. | ( <u>The Essenes</u> )                               |

Germans say," <sup>1</sup> he presents an incongruous relationship that is designed to be humorous. In the following passage, De Quincey's irony is so lightly presented and so deftly handled that the unpleasant nature of murder is almost forgotten: -

"...Fie on these dealers in poison, say I: can they not keep to the old honest way of cutting throats, without introducing such abominable innovations from Italy? I consider all these poisoning cases, compared with the legitimate style, as no better than waxwork by the side of sculpture, or a lithographic print by the side of a fine Volpato. But, dismissing these, there remain many excellent works of art in a pure style, such as nobody need be ashamed to own; and this every candid connoisseur will admit. Candid, observe, I say; for great allowances must be made in these cases; no artist can ever be sure of carrying through his own fine preconception. Awkward disturbances will arise; people will not submit to have their throats cut quietly; they will run, they will kick, they will bite; and whilst the portrait-painter often has to complain of too much torpor in his subject, the artist in our line is generally embarrassed by too much animation. At the same time, however disagreeable to the artist, this tendency in murder to excite and irritate the subject is certainly one of its advantages to the world in general which we ought not to overlook, since it favours the development of latent talent...." <sup>2</sup>

The effectiveness of this macabre kind of irony depends upon the taste of the reader, who must, at the outset, accept as humorous De Quincey's view of murder as a "fine art." If the reader objects to flippancy about murder, the device fails. But although De Quincey's good taste may be questioned, there is no doubt that his use of the ironic macabre is unsurpassed.

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1. De Quincey's letter to Hessey (1823?) discussing a projected article (British Museum MSS, Add. 37, 215, f. 19). It is only just to De Quincey to give the rest of the phrase: "Of course, morally it is a damnable business." De Quincey used a variation of the phrase in the 1827 article printed in Blackwood's Magazine (XIII, p. 13)
2. XIII, p. 39. (Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts)

De Quincey's use of the figures of speech shows varying degrees of elaborateness. He sometimes uses a series of the same kind of figure of speech. For example, in the following passage, he employs a series of personifications to make the emotion more intense: -

"The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her." <sup>1</sup>

Although De Quincey does not often extend a single simile to great length, he may use a group of similes to make an expression more forceful. In the following passage, he uses a series of similes which differ from each other, the only point of similarity among them being their individual resemblance to the violence of the Athenian audience: -

"But, unfortunately, in the Athenian audience, the ignorance, the headstrong violence of prejudice, the arrogance, and, above all, the levity of the national mind, presented, to an orator the most favourite, a scene like that of an ocean always rocking with storms; like a wasp always angry; like a lunatic, always coming out of a passion or preparing to go into one." <sup>2</sup>

De Quincey uses a different technique in the next example. The passage is a series of closely allied metaphors linked and interwoven. The imaginative elements in the paragraph are consistent, and the metaphors make the ideas clearer: -

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1. XIII, p. 320. (Dream Fugue)  
2. X, p. 326. ( A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature  
in its Foremost Pretensions )

"As " in today already walks tomorrow," so in the past experience of a youthful life may be seen dimly the future. The collisions with alien interests or hostile views of a child, boy, or very young man, so insulated as each is sure to be ... are limited by the exceedingly few and trivial lines of connexion along which he is able to radiate any essential influence whatever upon the fortunes or happiness of others. Circumstances may magnify his importance for the moment; but, after all, any cable which he carries out upon other vessels is easily slipped upon a feud arising. Far otherwise is the state of relations connecting an adult or responsible man with the circles around him as life advances. The network of these relations is a thousand times more intricate, the jarring of these intricate relations a thousand times more frequent, and the vibrations a thousand times harsher which these jarrings diffuse. This truth is felt beforehand, misgivingly and in troubled vision, by a young man who stands upon the threshold of manhood. One earliest instinct of fear and horror would darken his spirit if it could be revealed to itself and self-questioned at the moment of birth; a second instinct of the same nature would again pollute that tremulous mirror if the moment were as punctually marked as physical birth is marked which dismisses him finally upon the tides of absolute self-control. A dark ocean would seem the total expanse of life from the first; but far darker and more appalling would seem that inferior and second chamber of the ocean which called him away for ever from the direct accountability of others...." <sup>1</sup>

De Quincey frequently combines figures of speech. The following personification in combination with a short simile increases the feeling of the passage by bringing in a brief additional comparison: -

"...the Pestilence it is, scourging the seven-gated Thebes, as very soon the Sphinx also will scourge her, that is appointed to usher in, like some great ceremonial herald, that sad drama of Nemesis, that vast procession of revelation and retribution which the earth, and the graves of the earth, must finish." <sup>2</sup>

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- |          |             |                                  |
|----------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. XIII, | pp. 350-351 | ( <u>Suspisia de Profundis</u> ) |
| 2. VI,   | p. 149.     | ( <u>The Theban Sphinx</u> )     |



In much the same manner, he combines metaphors and similes. For example, in his metaphor of the palimpsest of the human brain, he makes an idea more vivid by including a short series of similes: -

"...countless are the mysterious handwritings of grief and joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest of your brain; and like the annual leaves of aboriginal forests, or the undissolving snows on the Himalaya, or light falling upon light, the endless strata have covered up each other in forgetfulness." 1

He often combines a metaphor with an apostrophe in a humorous passage directed at an individual. The following is aimed at

Schlosser: -

"Now, Mr. Schlosser, I have mended your harness; all right ahead: so drive on once more.

But, oh Castor and Pollux, whither - in what direction is it that the man is driving us? Positively, Schlosser, you must stop and let me get out. I'll go no further with such a drunken coachman...." 2

Sometimes one figure of speech arises naturally from another. In the following passage, De Quincey uses a simile ("as a drifting wreck") which is allied to the general comparison of Hazlitt's life to a voyage or a ship: -

"Hazlitt... sailed wilfully away from this sheltering harbour of his father's profession, - for sheltering

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1. XIII, p. 348. (Suspiria de Profundis)  
2. XI, p. 29. (Schlosser's Literary History: Addison)

it might have proved to him, and did prove to his youth, - only to toss ever afterwards as a drifting wreck at the mercy of storms." 1

It is indicative of De Quincey's skill in weaving together his imaginative elements that some figures of speech are almost inextricably mingled. The next example shows what I mean. The sea is personified through the use of such words as "pompous," "to forget and disown," "its infant state," and the like. In its larger aspects, by means of a direct comparison between the English language and the waters that make up the sea, the passage is a carefully constructed simile: -

"Great rivers, as they advance and receive vast tributary influxes, change their direction, their character, their very name; and the pompous inland sea bearing navies on its bosom has had leisure, through a thousand leagues of meandering, utterly to forget and disown the rocky mountain bed and the violent rapids which made its infant state unfitted to bear even a light canoe. The analogy is striking between this case and that of the English language. In its elementary period it takes a different name - the name of Anglo-Saxon; and so rude was it and barren at one stage of this rudimental form that in the Saxon Chronicle we find not more than a few hundred words...."2

It is to be noted that De Quincey is very careful to make his comparison quite obvious so as not to lose the thread of his argument. The first sentence is the figure of comparison; the second sentence points out the analogy; and the third sentence begins to develop the figure of speech itself.

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1. XI, p. 341. (Gilfillan's Literary Portraits: Hazlitt)  
2. XIV, p. 149. (The English Language)

### III

#### Imagery

The imagery that De Quincey uses will be the basis for the next section of my analysis. In this thesis, an "image" is "a mental reproduction, a memory, of a past sensational or perceptual experience, not necessarily visual." <sup>1</sup> To arouse that "mental reproduction" in the mind of the reader, De Quincey uses some characteristic stylistic techniques. Some of these may be seen in the following passage from the Suspiria: -

"I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Then I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? O no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound; eternal silence reigns in their kingdoms. They spoke not as they talked with Levana; they whispered not; they sang not; though methought they might have sung; for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. They wheeled in mazes; I spelled the steps. They telegraphed from afar; I read the signals. They conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness my eye traced the plots. Theirs were the symbols; mine are the words." <sup>2</sup>

The preceding passage contains an excellent group of visual images: mental pictures which are presented through terms pertaining to sight. But "them I saw," "signs in heaven," "heraldries painted on darkness,"

1. René Wellek and Austin Warren. Theory of Literature. New York: 1949, p. 191.
2. XIII, p. 364. (Suspiria de Profundis)

and other similar phrases are not definite in their visualizations. The phrases are couched in terms that are not specific, and the visual images are "free" images in that they depend for their effect on the individual response of the reader, who must fill in the vague outline given by De Quincey. "Heraldries painted on darkness" means almost as many different things as there are readers to interpret it. The phrase has a very general core of meaning which brings forth a visual image, but it is marked by an indefinite blurring of the edges. It is purposely and appropriately shadowy and vague.

Yet, if the visual images are vague, they are specific enough to create an impression of vastness and immensity, qualities in the dream writings which De Quincey himself attributes to opium: -

"The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, etc., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity...." <sup>1</sup>

Although the effect of opium upon De Quincey's visualizations is doubtful<sup>2</sup>, it is apparent that, throughout his works, his visual images frequently concern great distances and large objects. A passage in Joan of Arc that compares the coming events in France to a heavenly mountain range is illustrative: -

"These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies that to the scientific gazer first caught the colours of the new morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike of sweeping

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1. III, p. 435. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

2. See Meyer H. Abrams. The Milk of Paradise. Cambridge: 1934, and Elizabeth Schneider. The 'Dream' of Kubla Khan, PMLA, LX (1945), pp. 784-801. The influence of opium on De Quincey's writings is difficult to determine.

glooms overhead dwelt upon all meditative minds, even upon those that could not distinguish the tendencies nor decipher the forms." 1

Throughout his works, De Quincey's visual images are likely to stress heavily the theatrical or dramatic qualities of the picture and to be cast in general terms. The following passage presents a generalized picturesque scene: -

"The spectacle was hideous which the long cavalcade exhibited as it wound up the steep streets which led to the market-place. Waggon's fractured and splintered in every direction, upon which were stretched numbers of gallant soldiers, with wounds hastily dressed, from which the blood had poured in streams upon their gay habiliments; horses, whose limbs had been mangled by the sabre; and coaches or caleches loaded with burthens of dead and dying; these were amongst the objects which occupied the van in the line of march, as the travellers defiled through Klosterheim. The vast variety of faces, dresses, implements of war, or ensigns of rank, thrown together in the confusion of night and retreat, illuminated at intervals by bright streams of light from torches or candles in the streets, or at the windows of the houses, composed a picture which resembled the chaos of a dream, rather than any ordinary spectacle of human life." 2

Many of De Quincey's visual images concern darkness and light, rather than colour. For example, in Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow only two words suggesting colour are used: "crimson," in the phrase "angry with tragic crimson and black" ; and "bloody," in "some past and bloody sacrifice." Because the figures are those which have "receded amongst shades," De Quincey avoids any suggestion of the brightness that might arise from colour. Similarly, in The Vision of Sudden Death, De Quincey uses only one visualization that has colour.<sup>3</sup> The action, taking place

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1. V, pp. 392-393. (Joan of Arc)

2. XII, p. 56. (Klosterheim)

3. And that is doubtful: "See that bronze equestrian statue."

in the semi-darkness of moonlight and early dawn, does not lend itself to a description in terms of colour. On the other hand, the Dream Fugue has some colour imagery. But De Quincey uses only four colours in the Dream Fugue, and these in a traditionally symbolic manner: "white," in such phrases as "white roses," "white-robed choristers," and "white marble arm," - symbolizing youth and purity; "purple," in such expressions as "of purple granite was the necropolis," - apparently connected with either physical or abstract grandeur and majesty; "crimson" and its synonyms, such as "crimson robes of martyrs," "bloody bas-reliefs," and "reddening dawn," - symbolizing violence and sin; "golden," <sup>1</sup> in phrases such as "golden light" and "golden dawn," symbolizing nobility of soul and divinity. In the other imaginative writings of De Quincey, there is not much visual imagery that contains colour. It is surprising how very little there is in the most vivid passages of the Confessions.

In some passages in which colour might have been used effectively, De Quincey prefers general terms. For example, much of Part One of the Dream Fugue is devoted to descriptions of a visual nature. The tropic islands contain a "wilderness of floral beauty"; the deck of the pinnacle is covered with "blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages." But there is no mention of any specific colour, and even the kind of colours is doubtful. Similarly, in the Suspiria, De Quincey's visualization of a real country garden or park is presented in general terms and no colour is definitely indicated: -

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1. "Golden" is one of De Quincey's favourite words. He uses it sometimes in "synaesthetic images" by applying it to sound. "Golden epiphany" (III, p. 389) refers to the singing of the "angelic Grassini."



"Behold a lawn islanded with thickets! How perfect is the verdure; how rich the blossoming shrubberies that screen with verdurous walls from the possibility of intrusion, whilst by their own wandering line of distribution they shape, and umbrageously embay, what one might call lawny saloons and vestibules, sylvan galleries and closets! Some of these recesses, which unlink themselves as fluently as snakes, and unexpectedly as the shyest nooks, watery cells, and crypts, amongst the shores of a forest-lake, being formed by the mere caprices and ramblings of the luxuriant shrubs, are so small and so quiet that one might fancy them meant for boudoirs...." <sup>1</sup>

The two passages differ perhaps in the effectiveness of their descriptions. The Dream Fugue need not be specific. It concerns dreams, and definite terms might restrict the visualization to the extent that the element of fantasy would be weakened. However, the garden should be presented in specific terms to provide a feeling of reality. When applied to a real object, the general terms are so vague and nebulous that the description lacks the clarity of outline needed for effectiveness.

The passage quoted on page 250 also provides several examples of De Quincey's use of auditory imagery: mental reproductions presented through terms pertaining to sound. The auditory imagery, like the visual, is the indefinite "free" kind which is general enough to make the reader furnish the details needed to complete the image. "Mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel" presents almost as vague an auditory image as the visual one of "heraldries painted on darkness."

In addition, the passage illustrates De Quincey's use of auditory

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1. XIII, p. 357. (Suspiria de Profundis)

images to create a sense of quietness. For example, the series of sentences beginning with the words, "They may utter voices through the organs of man..." bases its effect, not upon sound, but upon the absence of sound.<sup>1</sup> It is also noticeable that the few sounds mentioned are the soft, barely - audible kind. "They whispered not" is one example. The entire passage is marked by a pervasive feeling of stillness.

Similarly, many of the auditory images throughout De Quincey's works concern silence or soft sounds: -

"Suddenly, from thoughts like these I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away...." <sup>2</sup>

"...what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of wo, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was - a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off- secretly announcing a ruin, that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable...." <sup>3</sup>

An example of De Quincey's masterly use of quiet auditory imagery is provided by Murder as One of the Fine Arts: -

"...On the stairs, not the stairs that led downwards to the kitchen, but the stairs that led upwards to the single storey of bedchambers above, - was heard a creaking sound. Next was heard most distinctly a footfall: one, two, three, four, five stairs were slowly and distinctly descended. Then the dreadful footsteps were heard advancing along the little narrow passage to the door. The steps - oh heavens! whose steps? have paused at the door. The very breathing can be heard of that dreadful being who has silenced all breathing except his own in the

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1. Cf. On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth in which De Quincey contrasts the silence in which the murder is committed with the sound of the knocking.

2. XIII, p. 311. ( The Vision of Sudden Death )

3. Ibid., pp. 312-313.

house. There is but a door between him and Mary. What is he doing on the other side of the door? A cautious step, a stealthy step it was that came down the stairs, then paced along the little narrow passage - narrow as a coffin - till at last the step pauses at the door...." <sup>1</sup>

But De Quincey's ear is also often caught by sounds that are sweeping and impressive. The "free" imagery of the vast, half-explained sounds in the following passage is representative: -

"Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character - a tumultuous dream - commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep - music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like that, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies." <sup>2</sup>

A slightly different aspect of his practice is shown in the following passage in which he employs the organ, the trumpet, and the human voice to create an impressive auditory image: -

"The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals - gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense - threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter...didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo - farewell love, and farewell anguish - rang through the dreadful sanctus." <sup>3</sup>

It is revealing that so many of De Quincey's auditory images concern sounds that are unpleasant: sounds associated with uneasiness, anxiety, or fear. Much less often does he use terms relating to sounds that are pleasing or that have pleasant associations. And when De Quincey builds auditory images that are not gloomy, it is apparent that his ear is

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| 1. XIII, | p. 88.  | ( <u>Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts</u> ) |
| 2. III,  | p. 446. | ( <u>The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater</u> ) |
| 3. XIII, | p. 326. | ( <u>Dream-Fugue</u> )                               |

almost too perceptive, too acute. Saintsbury's remark that "it has sometimes been complained by students, both of De Quincey the man and of De Quincey the writer, that there is something not exactly human in him"<sup>1</sup> is especially true of De Quincey's awareness of sound. The next passage quoted, in which De Quincey explains his response to music when he is under the influence of opium, is indicative. De Quincey makes it clear that his sensitivity is far beyond the normal and that his response is as much psychological as it is auditory: -

"...The mistake of most people is, to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and therefore that they are purely passive as to its effects. But this is not so; it is by the reaction of the mind upon the notices of the ear (the matter coming by the senses, the form from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed; and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now opium, by greatly increasing the activity of the mind, generally increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure. "But," says a friend, "a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters: I can attach no ideas to them." Ideas! my dear friend! there is no occasion for them; all that class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings. But this is a subject foreign to my present purposes; it is sufficient to say that a chorus etc., of elaborate harmony displayed before me, as in a piece of arras-work, the whole of my past life - not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music; no longer painful to dwell upon, but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction, and its passions exalted, spiritualised, and sub-limed." <sup>2</sup>

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1. Saintsbury, Collected Essays and Papers, op. cit., p. 234.
  2. III, pp. 390-391. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)

De Quincey does not make extensive use of tactual imagery: that which is connected with the sense of touch. His most effective use of tactual imagery appears in combination with the other kinds, as in the following passages: -

"...the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer." <sup>1</sup>

"I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud." <sup>2</sup>

The following passage is notable for its lack of effectiveness. But its failure arises not so much from the tactual imagery that De Quincey uses as it does from the stilted Gothic quality of the prose: -

"The bare-armed ruffian at this moment raised his arm to seize hers. Shrinking from the pollution of his accursed touch, Paulina turned hastily round, darted through the open door, and fled, like a dove pursued by vultures, along the passages which stretched before her. Already she felt their hot breathing upon her neck, already the foremost had raised his hand to arrest her, when a sudden turn brought her full upon a band of young women, tending upon one of superior rank, manifestly their mistress." <sup>3</sup>

It is noticeable that in describing the actual murders in Murder as One of the Fine Arts, De Quincey does not use a great deal of tactual imagery but confines himself to narrating the events. Possibly he felt that the killings themselves were sufficiently horrible to be impressive, and that any additional emphasis on the tactual would weaken the effect. The following passage is taken from the account of the Williamson murders: -

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1. III, p. 445. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  2. Ibid., p. 443.
  3. CII, p. 137. (Klosterheim)

"Mrs. Williamson had probably not seen him, from the accident of standing with her back to the door. Her, therefore, before he was himself observed at all, he had stunned and prostrated by a shattering blow on the back of her head; this blow, inflicted by a crowbar, had smashed in the hinder part of the skull. She fell; and by the noise of her fall ( for all was the work of a moment) had first roused the attention of the servant, who then uttered the cry which had reached the young man; but before she could repeat it the murderer had descended with his uplifted instrument upon her head, crushing the skull inwards upon the brain. Both the women were irrecoverably destroyed, so that further outrages were needless; and, moreover, the murderer was conscious of the imminent danger from delay; and yet, in spite of his hurry, so fully did he appreciate the fatal consequences to himself, if any of his victims should so far revive into consciousness as to make circumstantial despositions, that, by way of making this impossible, he had proceeded instantly to cut the throats of each...."<sup>1</sup>

De Quincey does not use other kinds of imagery, such as those pertaining to taste and smell, in any distinctive manner. Most of his effective passages show a preponderance of the visual and the auditory with the tactual somewhat less in evidence. In some of his most memorable passages, De Quincey uses a combination of images. For example, the following sentence alternates rapidly the visual and the auditory: -

"I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos...." <sup>2</sup>

The following passage shows also a combination of images. The effect depends mostly upon visual imagery, but both the auditory and the tactual are important factors: -

"I shed tears as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is nineteen years ago; and yet, at this moment, I see, as if it were yesterday, the lineaments and expressions of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze. It was the picture of a lovely lady, which

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1. XIII, p. 103. (Murder as One of the Fine Arts)  
2. III, p. 442. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)



hung over the mantelpiece; the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen, or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint. Whilst I was yet gazing upon it, the deep tones of the old church clock proclaimed that it was six o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, then gently walked out, and closed the door for ever." 1

The following, even longer passage shows a highly effective combination of images. The tactual is somewhat more apparent than is usually the case: -

"...The house could hardly be called large - that is, it was not large on each separate storey; but, having four storeys in all, it was large enough to impress vividly the sense of its echoing loneliness; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious uproar on the staircase and hall; so that, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold and hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more from the self-created one of ghosts. Against these enemies I could promise her protection; human companionship was in itself protection; but of other and more needful aid I had, alas! little to offer. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of law-papers for a pillow, but with no other covering than a large horseman's cloak; afterwards, however, we discovered in a garret an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our comfort. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill, I took her into my arms, so that, in general, she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not; for, during the last two months of my sufferings, I slept much in the daytime, and was apt to fall into transient dozings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching; for, besides the tumultuousness of my dreams..., my sleep was never more than what is called dog-sleep; so that I could hear myself moaning; and very often I was awakened suddenly by my own voice...." 2

In the above passage, De Quincey mingles consummately several different

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1. III, p. 297. (The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater)
  2. Ibid., p. 355.

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kinds of images to present a pathetic scene. His images may be said to complement each other in that each treats of a different aspect of the scene through the use of terms pertaining to the several senses. The result of the interweaving of images is an unusually effective paragraph of vivid prose.

### Conclusion

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The purpose of this thesis has been to analyse the prose style of De Quincey to determine his characteristic patterns and modes of expression. My results are as follows: -

De Quincey's vocabulary reveals a mind that is unusual in its breadth and interests. To illuminate a subject, he draws upon both the classical and the modern languages, and employs effectively terms taken from a large number of different fields: music, business and trade, war and military life, the sciences, mathematics, the arts and crafts, medicine, rhetoric, the pseudo-arts and the pseudo-sciences, and philosophy. He uses several different levels of language, ranging from formal through colloquial to slang and cant. His usage with respect to the different levels of language shows varying degrees of effectiveness since he is capable of abrupt changes from one level to another and incongruous mixtures of the different levels.

To secure emphasis, De Quincey effectively uses a series of words and phrases in varying ways: to build to a peak, to expand an image, to elaborate a description, and to list various groups and classes. He also achieves emphasis through repetition and through the massing of words and phrases in a passage. Throughout his works, he often employs the device of italicizing words and phrases as a purely artificial means of emphasis.

De Quincey's use of the parts of speech is marked by the predominance of the nouns and the adjectives. He makes less use of the other parts of speech, and is very likely to use the finite verb in a restricted manner. In some of his sentences, the finite verb is used weakly, the nouns and their modifiers carrying the bulk of the thought or the emotion. De Quincey's dependence upon the nouns and their modifiers is most apparent in his impassioned prose, in which the curiously static quality of dreams is achieved partly by using the substantive elements to carry the emotive weight of the sentence. In this respect, his revisions, as well as his initial choice of words, in the Dream-Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death, are revealing in that they indicate De Quincey's interest in the emotive nouns and the adjectives and his lack of concern over the verbs.

De Quincey's sentences are distinguished by their length and complexity. Although he expresses his dislike for periodicity, one of the most distinctive features of his own style is the extensive use of the periodic sentence. He employs numerous constructions to avoid completing the thought until the closing words of the sentence: introductory phrases and clauses followed by a principal clause, suspensions between the principal parts of the sentence, expansions of the subject, a principal clause followed by subordinate elements containing essential material, and suspensive couples. He sometimes

presents an additional emphatic point after the thought of the sentence has been closed. In a long and involved periodic sentence, De Quincey uses competently an amazing combination of devices.

His loose sentences follow various patterns: a principal clause followed by subordinate elements in a parallel or a sub-dependent arrangement; two principal clauses in a parallel arrangement; a short principal clause followed by a long one that adds action, ideas, or emotions allied to those in the first clause; a long principal clause followed by a short one that makes a concluding point, a summary, or an intensification of the emotion; three or more principal clauses in parallel and various balanced arrangements of the subordinate elements; three principal clauses that form an introduction, a transition, and a conclusion; and a series of principal clauses that explain more specifically the thought or emotion of the first one. In a single long sentence, De Quincey sometimes combines many of these patterns to form an involved and formidable construction. Both his periodic and loose sentences contain suspensory and parenthetical material. Although many of De Quincey's sentences suffer from diffuseness and digression, he is one of the great masters of sentence construction in English prose.

De Quincey's style exhibits three characteristic mannerisms:

(1) His writings contain a great number of carefully worked out transitional elements between the parts of his sentences, between the sentences themselves, and between the larger sections. His



elaborate transitions indicate the relationships between the various elements quite clearly, but sometimes impede the progress of the thought or the action, a defect particularly noticeable in his narrative works. (2) De Quincey employs inversions so often that his use of them is a distinctive feature of his style. He may invert the normal order of words in a sentence or invert elements to form interrogative, imperative, or exclamatory sentences. Although he sometimes uses inversions for rhythm or for transition, most of his inversions are made for the sake of emphasis. The pervasiveness of inversions in his works is indicated by the fact that so many appear in the early versions of the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death and that his revisions added significantly to the number. When used without an adequate reason, De Quincey's inversions fail signally in their effect since elements inverted unnecessarily appear forced and stilted. (3) In his sentences, in his paragraphs, and in the longer portions of his works, De Quincey lacks unity. His violations of unity arise from the introduction of extraneous matter, the too-detailed consideration of relevant matter, and, especially in his longer sections, the omission of necessary material. Although some of his sentences and paragraphs are effectively unified, De Quincey never succeeds in building a large unified structure. His most notable works possess a charm that makes them interesting in spite of the lack of unity or are works of fantasy in which the lack of unity is appropriate. In

the bulk of his works, however, De Quincey's failure to observe unity is one of his most reprehensible literary defects.

In general, De Quincey's rhythmized prose is symphonic in structure, his most memorable writings containing intricate and varied combinations of prose-feet and cadences. Prose-feet with waved rhythm, especially amphibrachs and third paeons, are the most evident, although he combines all kinds of prose-feet to create a characteristic undulating effect. The patterns of prose-feet in some of his works, especially those that are highly dramatic, approach the balance and regularity of poetic metre. De Quincey's use of cadences is not marked by the predominance of any one kind, but by a skilful and complicated interweaving of a variety of the different kinds. That his techniques of rhythm and cadence are integral parts of his rhythmized prose is shown by his revisions in the Dream Fugue and The Vision of Sudden Death, for he changes elements to increase the undulating quality of the early versions. In his consummate handling of rhythm and cadence, De Quincey reveals clearly an artistic consciousness that makes full use of his own individual kind of genius.

The personification is the figure of speech used most often by De Quincey, who often introduces the device formally and extends it to great length. He so often gives human attributes to abstractions, natural phenomena, and other objects that personifications pervade

all of his writings. He also makes extensive use of the metaphor, sometimes presenting a comparison quite obviously and elaborately. Although his similes are not usually so long as his personifications and metaphors, De Quincey employs a considerable number of short ones, the comparison appearing most often in works other than his dream-writings. Of the other figures of speech, the hyperbole, the apostrophe, and irony are the most distinctive, in that they occur often and show the characteristic De Quincey ornateness. He uses his figures of speech, singly and in combination, for various purposes: to intensify the feeling of a passage, to make an idea clearer, to produce mental surprise, and to produce humour. Many of De Quincey's most memorable passages depend for their effectiveness on the richness and vividness of his figures of speech, although his two most common devices, the personification and the metaphor, sometimes fail because he spins them out to inordinate lengths; and the success of the ironic macabre depends much on the taste of the individual reader.

De Quincey's imagery is most often visual or auditory, the tactual less in evidence, and the other kinds not used in a distinctive manner. Although De Quincey's visual imagery sometimes is concerned with detail, his most characteristic visual images are presented in general, sometimes indefinite terms. The visual images in his dream-writings are especially notable in that they often consist of vivid depictions of immense distances and gigantic objects, a feature that De Quincey himself

attributes to the influence of opium. But, although the part played by opium is doubtful, it is apparent that, throughout his works, De Quincey's eye is often caught by the large dramatic features of a visual scene. The visual images in his dream-works depend for their effect on the general contrasts of light and dark, a feature highly suitable to the shadowy quality of the subject. Colour imagery is not often used by De Quincey in his dream-writings, or, if employed is associated with rather conventional symbols.

De Quincey's auditory imagery, like his visual, is usually vague and indefinite in his dream-writings, and is equally appropriate to the feeling of the subject. Although auditory images that deal with quietness are possibly De Quincey's most effective, he also uses skilfully a varied group of images that concern sonorous sounds. Many of De Quincey's auditory images present sounds that are gloomy and unpleasant; and throughout his works, his auditory images indicate that he is keenly aware of sounds and their implications.

De Quincey uses tactual imagery most effectively in combination with the other kinds. He shows restraint in that he avoids the excessive use of tactual imagery in those passages that present violent action. In general, De Quincey's most impressive images are those that combine the visual, the auditory, and the tactual, some of the most vivid passages in his imaginative writings being skilful mixtures of sight, sound, and touch.

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